Peter's
BAKING PARTY

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This book is dedicated to my
Auntie Rachel and Mum.

For my mum's inspiration to me
in the kitchen as a young child and
my auntie's inspiration to me and
thousands of children in her
years as a teacher.

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WELCOME TO MY BAKING PARTY!

I'm Peter, and I love baking! I have baked for as long as I can remember. It started with making the simplest recipes with my mum, and then from the age of twelve I got completely hooked. I tried all the techniques I saw on TV and read in books, and learned as much about baking as possible. Baking is special to me, and I find it incredibly fun and exciting. I want to share this excitement with you through this book.

The goal of this book and every recipe inside is to inspire you to get baking. I want you to try baking because it helps us develop creativity, resilience, numeracy and literacy skills, kitchen skills, independence, teamwork, self-confidence and more, without even realising it. When you bake, it's just about having fun and sharing your creations with the people you love. You don't even realise the skills and attributes you're developing, and that's the magic of baking.

I have developed these recipes to be fun and exciting, thinking about what I used to and still love to bake. But I also talked to school children to hear what they wanted to see. I love every recipe here, and I hope you will love them too. Many of them are very simple, perfect whether you have zero kitchen experience or years of it.

However, I want you to know that this isn't just a basic baking book: there is proper baking here. Some of the most difficult recipes are quite challenging and you will need some practice to build up the skills for them. It was important for me to put in these challenging bakes. My auntie is a primary school teacher, and she told me 'You should never underestimate what a child can do'. If you are passionate about something and apply yourself to it, you can do amazing things, maybe even things that you thought weren't possible when you first picked up something new. So, no matter what age you are or how much prior experience you have, you can use this book for a fun activity and bake for the odd bake sale. Or, if you become hugely passionate about baking, you can work through the difficulty levels of the book, stretch yourself and develop into a star baker.

Thanks for coming to my party. I hope you have a blast!

Peter

BIRTHDAY BABKA

Babka is a sweet cake-like bread that originated in Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. 'Babka' means 'grandmother', and some say this name comes from the original tin that these cakes would be baked in, which would look a little like a skirt a grandmother might wear. Now, babkas are baked in many different shapes, most commonly in loaf tins. They can also be filled with lots of different things. The most common is probably chocolate. What all babkas do have in common is a very enriched dough (this means it has lots of butter and eggs in it) filled with a tasty filling that is rolled up tightly to give a swirly design in the bread. Because there is lots of butter and egg in this dough, it is almost closer to cake than bread.

I will be honest here, this is one of the most challenging bakes in the book. The dough gets quite long and can be tricky to handle and move. Try to be confident when you are handling the dough, and you can always grab a second pair of hands to help make braiding and moving the dough easier.

TIME REQUIRED

30 minutes prep
45 minutes chilling
1 hour proving
35 minutes baking

BAKING CHALLENGE

INGREDIENTS

For the dough

475g (1lb 1oz) plain flour
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons fast-action dried yeast
30g (1oz) caster sugar
3 eggs
65ml (¼ cup) milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
100g (3½oz) butter, very soft

For the filling

225g (8oz) cream cheese
75g (2½oz) icing sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
75g (2½oz) rainbow sprinkles

For the syrup

30g (1oz) sugar
2 tablespoons water

For the icing

50g (1¾oz) icing sugar
1½ teaspoons water

METHOD

MAKE THE DOUGH

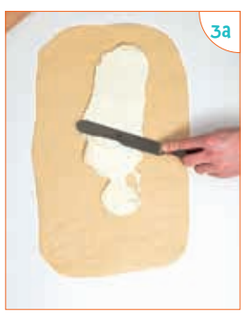
1. Add the dough ingredients into a mixing bowl. Stir together with a table knife until it forms into a shaggy, rough dough.
2. Tip this out onto the work surface and knead for 5–10 minutes until combined into quite a smooth dough. It will be a little sticky at the start but shouldn't be once you're done kneading.
3. Place the dough back in the bowl, cover and leave in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

MAKE THE FILLING

1. Sieve the icing sugar into the cream cheese. Add the vanilla and stir until combined.

ASSEMBLE, BAKE AND DECORATE THE BABKA

1. Remove the dough from the fridge and turn it out onto a lightly floured surface.
2. Press the dough flat with your palms and encourage it into a rough rectangle shape. Roll the dough into a rectangle about 50cm x 35cm (20" x 14").
3. Spread the cream cheese mixture over the filling in an even layer, leaving a border around the dough. Completely cover this cream cheese with rainbow sprinkles.
4. Roll the dough up into a tight spiral from one of the long ends.
5. Bend the roll of dough into a horseshoe shape and place it on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Cover the dough with cling film and chill the dough in the freezer for 15–30 minutes.
6. Unbend the dough and use a serrated knife to cut down the middle of the roll lengthways, chopping it into two long pieces.
7. Lay the two long pieces of dough next to each other with their cut sides facing up. Place the middle of one piece of dough over the middle of the other, creating a cross.
8. Twist the two pieces of dough around one another from the middle up and from the middle down, creating a braid. Keep the cut side of the babka facing up whilst you twist.
9. Wrap the long braided dough into a coil shape and tuck the end of the dough underneath the coil to hide it.
10. Pick up the coil and place it onto a baking tray lined with baking paper. Cover the dough lightly with clingfilm and place in a warm spot to prove for 45 minutes–1 hour 30 minutes until nearly doubled in size and puffy (this will take longer if you are working with very cold dough).
11. Whilst the dough is proving, preheat the oven to 160°C fan (350°F/gas 4). Bake the babka for about 35–40 minutes until golden all over.
12. Once the babka is out of the oven, add the sugar and water for the syrup into a pan and stir over high heat until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture bubbles.
13. Brush the syrup all over the warm babka to make it shiny. Throw some extra sprinkles over the babka whilst it is sticky with the syrup.
14. Once the babka is completely cool, mix the icing sugar with the water to make a thick but flowing icing. Drizzle this all over the babka from a height. Top with a few more sprinkles, and it's ready to serve.



Bake it your own

- You can use this recipe to make two loaf-shaped babkas. Once rolled up, slice the log in half lengthways. Slice and braid the two portions of dough as instructed in the main recipe, leaving them as a straight braid. Fill two greased and baking-paper-lined 900g (2lb) loaf tins with the doughs. Once proved, bake them for about 40 minutes.
- You can make a chocolate babka by replacing the cream cheese and icing sugar with 300g (10½oz) of chocolate spread. You can also keep the sprinkles or replace them with 75g (2½oz) chopped roasted hazelnuts.

GINGERBREAD POPCORN

GF

Paddington 2, Johnny English, *Cheaper by the Dozen*, *Moana*, *Kung Fu Panda* – all my favourite movies are made better when snacking on a bowl of popcorn during family movie night. But they are made even better when snacking on this popcorn! This takes hardly any time to prepare but leaves you with popcorn with the most amazing, crunchy-sweet exterior. It is so moreish and so good that it's hard to share with the person sitting next to you!

TIME REQUIRED

10 minutes

BAKING CHALLENGE

INGREDIENTS

50g (1¾oz) dark brown sugar
30g (1oz) golden syrup
30g (1oz) butter
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon mixed spice
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
50g (1¾oz) salted popcorn

METHOD

1. Line a large, rimmed baking tray or roasting tin with baking paper.
2. Add the sugar, syrup, butter and spices into a big deep-sided pan over high heat, stirring until the butter has melted.
3. Once the mixture begins to bubble, leave it on the heat for 1 minute.
4. Throw in the bicarbonate of soda and stir, then add the popcorn off the heat and stir to coat all the popcorn. Be very careful as the mixture is incredibly hot!
5. Once the popcorn is coated in the mixture, pour it into the lined tin and spread out with a spoon into a flat layer.
6. Leave the mixture to cool and harden at room temperature before breaking up and enjoying.

Bake it your own

You can remove the spices, and you will still make a deliciously crunchy, salty-sweet popcorn.

CRANBERRY & PISTACHIO FLORENTINES

GFO

Florentines are little biscuits made of a caramel-like mixture combined with lots of nuts and dried fruit. This recipe makes Florentines that are very snappy and crisp. They taste delicious. However, their crispy-thin texture also means they are at risk of breaking when you move them about, so do handle them with care. They are fragile!

MAKES 12 FLORENTINES

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes prep
15 minutes baking

BAKING CHALLENGE

Bake it your own

- You can switch out the cranberries and pistachios for your favourite dried fruit and nuts.
- Once the Florentines are baked, you can use different shapes of cookie cutters to cut out shaped Florentines.

Make this gluten-free

Replace the plain flour with gluten-free plain flour.

INGREDIENTS

For the Florentines

60g (2oz) butter
40g (1½oz) caster sugar
40g (1½oz) light brown sugar
20g (¾oz) plain flour
Pinch of salt
50g (1¾oz) dried cranberries
50g (1¾oz) flaked almonds
30g (1oz) pistachios, roughly chopped

For decoration

30g (1oz) white chocolate

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (400°F/gas 6). Line two baking trays with baking paper.
2. Melt the butter, caster sugar and light brown sugar in a pan over medium heat.
3. Once melted, pour into a mixing bowl and stir through the flour and a pinch of salt. Add all the remaining Florentine ingredients and mix until all evenly coated and combined into a rough crumbly mixture.
4. Spoon 6 tablespoons of mixture onto each baking tray, well spread apart. Spread out the crumbly mounds into a flat round shape. It won't be a single mass of dough; it will be a crumbly mix spread out. Bake in the oven for 10–12 minutes and deep golden all over. Leave to cool completely on the baking trays.
5. If you want to make super neat Florentines, use a cookie cutter to cut the baked Florentines 2 minutes after they're out of the oven.
6. Flip the cooled Florentines upside down. Melt the white chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water or in the microwave, and drizzle the melted white chocolate over the Florentines with a spoon.

Bake it your own

This cake will taste amazing frosted with the cream cheese frosting from the Carrot Patch Cupcake recipe on page 141.

Make this gluten-free

- Replace the plain flour in the sponge with gluten-free plain flour.
- Ensure the baking powder is gluten-free.

ANY REASON CHOCOLATE CAKE

GFO

This is an any-reason chocolate cake because you really can bake it for any reason. It's got enough wow factor to serve for a birthday or pudding at a dinner party. It's also quick and simple enough to throw together for a slice of mid-afternoon cake or just to bake for the joy of baking at any time.

The cake recipe is a go-to for me and is my favourite chocolate cake. The batter is very liquid (you will probably be surprised how liquid it is), but this makes the cake one of the softest and most moist you have ever had. The frosting is also a bit of a cheat. It takes 2 or 3 minutes to make but has great hazelnut and chocolate flavour from the chocolate spread.

TIME REQUIRED

15 minutes prep
25 minutes baking

BAKING CHALLENGE

INGREDIENTS

For the cake

85g (3oz) plain flour
40g (1½oz) cocoa powder
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
130g (4½oz) light brown sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg
90ml (¼ cup + 2 tablespoons) milk
50ml (3 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon) oil
60ml (¼ cup) boiling water

For the frosting

100ml (⅓ cup + 1 tablespoon) double cream
100g (3½oz) chocolate hazelnut spread

For decoration

20g (¾oz) hazelnuts, roasted

METHOD

BAKE THE CAKE

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C fan (375°F/gas 5). Grease and base line an 18cm (7") round cake tin with baking paper.
2. Sieve the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl.
3. Add in the sugar and salt. Whisk in the vanilla, egg, milk and oil until smooth.
4. Measure the boiling water and slowly pour it into the mixture, whisking constantly.
5. Pour the thin batter into the prepared tin. Bake for 25–30 minutes or until a skewer comes out with only a few moist crumbs. Turn out to cool on a wire rack.

MAKE THE FROSTING

1. Whip the cream with the hazelnut spread using an electric mixer until it holds a trail from the whisk.
2. Spread over the top of the cooled sponge and sprinkle over chopped hazelnuts.

NO-CHURN ICE CREAM

GF

I am crazy about ice cream! I can't help but smile every time I eat it. The only issue with ice cream is that you really need a fancy ice cream machine to make it at home – except with this recipe! All you need is a bowl, an electric whisk and a tub to store the ice cream in the freezer. The fat content from the double cream and the form of sugar in the condensed milk means it will freeze smooth and soft without churning in a fancy machine. However, this ice cream is creamier than most, so you might only need small servings.

Ice cream should be fun, so go crazy with adding mix-ins into the mixture before freezing. Some ideas for good mix-ins are:

- Your favourite chocolate bars
- Biscuits and cookies
- Cookie dough (page 97, Cookie Dough Truffles)
- Granola
- Caramel sauce (page 131, STP Muffins)
- Chocolate Sauce
- Jam
- Curd

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1 QUART) OF ICE CREAM

TIME REQUIRED

10 minutes prep
4+ hours freezing

BAKING CHALLENGE

Bake it your own

You can still add any mix-ins you like to shop-bought ice cream. Allow it to soften for about 10 minutes out of the freezer, then stir in mix-ins of your choosing before refreezing.

INGREDIENTS

600ml (2⅓ cups) double cream
1 tin condensed milk (397g/14oz)
1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste
200–300g (7–11oz) mix-ins (sauces and chunks)

METHOD

1. Add the double cream, condensed milk and vanilla into a mixing bowl. Whisk with an electric mixer until it thickens and holds its shape in soft peaks.
2. Fold through your mix-ins (chop solid mix-ins into bitesize chunks). If folding through a sauce, don't mix it too much, so you are left with ripples through the ice cream.
3. Pour the ice cream into an ice cream tub or loaf tin, cover the surface with baking paper and freeze for at least 4 hours.

Baking Tip

If you want to make super neat scones, roll the dough out on a chopping board and let it rest in the fridge for 30 minutes before cutting. Rest again for an extra 20 minutes in the fridge before egg washing and baking.

SCONES

GFO

Scones are my favourite part of an afternoon tea, even though they are the simplest component. Given the option of a scone served with clotted cream and jam or a cake, I would choose the scone nine times out of ten. You can throw together a scone mix very fast and have hot scones out of the oven from start to finish in about 30 minutes. However, fancy hotels and places serving afternoon tea often have beautifully neat scones with straight sides. If you want to recreate these, you will need a bit more patience to wait for the dough to rest and relax. See the baking tip on the opposite page if you want to make professional-looking scones.

MAKES 8 SMALL SCONES

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes prep
15 minutes baking

BAKING CHALLENGE

INGREDIENTS

For the scone dough

250g (9oz) self-raising flour
30g (1oz) caster sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
35g (1¼oz) butter
1 egg
75ml (⅓ cup) milk

For the egg wash

1 egg yolk
Pinch of salt and sugar

Bake it your own

Add in 75g (2½oz) dried fruit or chocolate chips with the egg and milk whilst making the dough.

Make this gluten-free

- Replace the self-raising flour with gluten-free self-raising flour and ½ teaspoon xanthan gum.
- Ensure the baking powder is gluten-free.

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C fan (410°F/gas 6). Line two baking trays with baking paper.
2. Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a bowl. Rub in the butter with your fingertips until no large clumps of butter remain.
3. Whisk the egg with the milk and add to the dry ingredients. Stir together with a table knife until beginning to form into a dough. Lightly knead the dough a couple of times until the mixture is fully combined.
4. Turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface. Roll out to a depth of just under 3cm (1”). Rub the edge of a round cutter approx. 5cm (2”) in diameter with flour and cut straight down on the dough. Transfer the scones to the baking trays. Gently knead together the offcuts, re-roll and cut out more scones until you have used all the dough.
5. Mix the egg yolk with a pinch of salt and sugar to make an egg wash. Brush the tops of the scones with the egg wash before baking for 12–15 minutes.

CHAPTER 9

PARTY BAKES

WINTER

GINGERBREAD HOUSE

GFO

This is a feat of both great baking and engineering. A gingerbread house doesn't only need to sit on a dinner table. During the winter and Christmas months, it can be used as decoration around the house. Once constructed, a gingerbread house can stay standing for a very long time, basically as long as you can stop yourself from digging into it.

I have given you the recipe for the gingerbread and icing and the templates to copy so you can construct your house, but how you go about decorating is entirely up to you. Get creative with the sweets you throw on there, or use other edible decorations like sprinkles, cereals, nuts, fondant decorations, etc. It takes quite a lot of care and attention to get the structure baked and built, but once you have a standing house, you can take as much time as you like to have fun and go wild with the decorations.

TIME REQUIRED

45 minutes prep
15 minutes baking
1 hour assembly and decoration.

BAKING CHALLENGE

Make this gluten-free

Replace the plain flour in the gingerbread with gluten-free plain flour and add 1 teaspoon of xanthan gum.

INGREDIENTS

For the gingerbread

175g (6oz) butter
125g (4½oz) dark muscovado sugar
100g (3½oz) golden syrup
450g (1lb) plain flour
1½ teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
½ teaspoon salt
1½ teaspoons ground ginger
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 boiled sweets, optional

For the royal icing

40g (1½oz) pasteurised egg whites (1 egg white)
1 teaspoons lemon juice
240g (8½oz) icing sugar

METHOD

MAKE THE GINGERBREAD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (400°F/gas 6). Gather two baking trays. Copy the templates from the diagram onto a flattened cereal box and cut these out.
2. Add the butter, sugar and syrup into a pan over a low heat. Stir occasionally until the butter has melted and all the sugar has dissolved.
3. Meanwhile, add the flour, bicarbonate of soda, salt and spices into a large mixing bowl and stir to combine. Add in the liquid sugar and butter mixture and stir into the dry mix until most of the flour has been incorporated.
4. Allow to cool until barely warm to the touch, then tip out onto your work surface and knead for a couple of minutes until a bit smoother.
5. Roll out the dough between two big sheets of baking paper to about ¾cm (¼"–½") thick. Cut out as many template shapes from this portion of dough as possible. You need

2 x front/back, 2 x sides and 2 x roof. Cut the baking paper around each shape you have cut out and move these onto your baking trays on their baking paper.

6. Re-roll the offcuts between baking paper to ¾cm (¼"–½") and cut the remaining template shapes you need. With any remaining dough, you can roll it out and cut little biscuits of any shape. Christmas trees will look great and can stand next to the finished house.
7. From the front of the house, cut out a small door and two small windows with a 3cm (1") cookie cutter.
8. From the back of the house, cut out a small window with a 4cm (1½") cookie cutter.
9. From the sides of the house, cut out 2 small windows with a 3cm (1") cookie cutter.

My gingerbread house measures . . .

Roof x2

17cm (6½") long and 14cm (5½") wide.

Front & back

13cm (5") wide across the base, 8cm (3") up to the corner of the roof, 6½cm (2½") from the corner of the roof to the middle of the width and 10cm (4") from there to the point of the roof.

Side x2

12cm (4¾") width and 8cm (8") tall.

10. Keep the door intact to bake off. Re-roll the window cutouts and cut out more biscuits.
11. Crush the boiled sweets in a food bag with a rolling pin.
12. Bake the biscuits in the oven for about 7 minutes. Remove from the oven and sprinkle the crushed sweets into the windows of the house in a thin layer. Place the biscuits back in the oven for 3–4 more minutes until the sweets have melted and the biscuits are firm around the edges.
13. Leave the biscuits to cool on the baking trays.

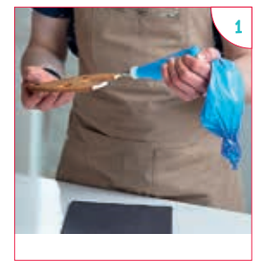
MAKE THE ROYAL ICING

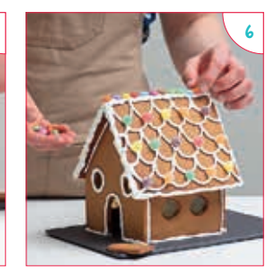
1. Whisk the egg whites until frothy. Add the lemon juice and whisk in the icing sugar in four batches with an electric hand mixer. When adding the icing sugar, start slow, then increase the speed once most of the icing sugar is incorporated.
2. The mixture should be firm, thick and able to hold its shape. Fill a piping bag fitted with a small round nozzle with the royal icing.

ASSEMBLE THE HOUSE

NOTE: This can be difficult to do by yourself. You might want to grab a helper to help hold all the pieces together while building the house.

1. Pipe a border of royal icing around the door frame and windows of the house.
2. Pipe royal icing onto the bottom edge of the house front and press this down on the serving board. Pipe down one of the inside edges and press a house side with royal icing piped onto its bottom edge into this to join. Repeat this with the other side of the house, pipe down the open edges of the sides, and attach the back of the house. Leave this to set for about 15 minutes.
3. Pipe royal icing down the slanted sides of the front and back of the houses and attach the roof pieces to these. The roof should slightly overhang the front, back and sides of the house. Hold the roof in place for about 3–5 minutes until it has set enough not to slide off.
4. Pipe royal icing along all of the open edges of the roof to look like snow. Use a toothpick to ruffle these royal icing borders and give texture.
5. Spread a layer of icing around the border of the serving board around the house to create a snowy look.
6. Use royal icing to stick sweets and chocolates onto the gingerbread house to decorate. Let your imagination go wild!





ABOUT PETER SAWKINS

Peter Sawkins, an accounting and finance student at the University of Edinburgh, is the youngest ever winner of the *Great British Bake Off*. A passionate baker since childhood, he credits the show as one of the reasons he embarked on his culinary journey. He is the author of *Peter Bakes*. *Peter's Baking Party* is his second book.

You can find Peter on Instagram and TikTok

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