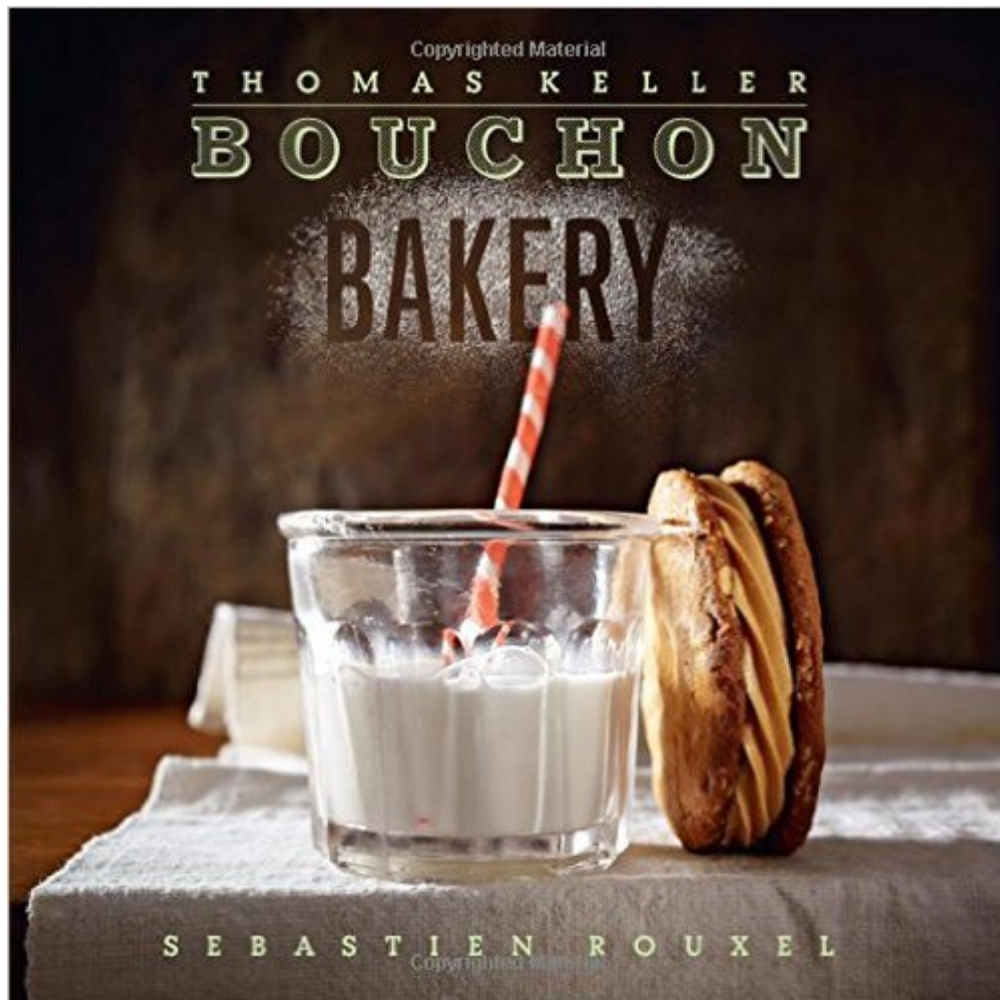




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Bouchon Bakery (The Thomas Keller Library)



Synopsis

Winner, IACP Cookbook Award for Food Photography & Styling (2013) #1 New York Times Bestseller Baked goods that are marvels of ingenuity and simplicity from the famed Bouchon Bakery. The tastes of childhood have always been a touchstone for Thomas Keller, and in this dazzling amalgam of American and French baked goods, you'll find recipes for the beloved TKOs and Oh Ohs (Keller's takes on Oreos and Hostess's Ho Hos) and all the French classics he fell in love with as a young chef apprenticing in Paris: the baguettes, the macarons, the mille-feuilles, the tartes aux fruits. Co-author Sebastien Rouxel, executive pastry chef for the Thomas Keller Restaurant Group, has spent years refining techniques through trial and error, and every page offers a new lesson: a trick that assures uniformity, a subtlety that makes for a professional finish, a flash of brilliance that heightens flavor and enhances texture. The deft twists, perfectly written recipes, and dazzling photographs make perfection inevitable.

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Customer Reviews

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With a cavalcade of Michelin-starred restaurants and James Beard awards and the respect and admiration of an entire industry, it may seem there's little left for culinary powerhouse Keller to conquer. But here, as he has done with the French Laundry and his other establishments, he

proves the cookbook can be so much more as he culls together a collection of recipes from his famous chain of bakeries in a masterfully produced tome. The glossy, big format lends itself well to foodies of all types, who will relish the many pages of resourceful information and reliable recipes. With each recipe, Keller includes applicable techniques and must-know tidbits, so readers really won't need to venture beyond these pages for much else. Tackling macaroons or tempering chocolate, for example, may terrify some baking newbies, but Keller's focused prose lays out the steps clearly and confidently. One puzzling interruption is a series of clip art images sprinkled throughout. For such an otherwise fastidious attention to detail, these seem out of place and second-rate, though readers furiously baking Keller's succulent treats may hardly notice.

--Casey Bayer

I have been cooking from Chef Keller's books for a few years now and the results have always been extraordinary. Even though I just received the book yesterday (one day early... thank you USPS), I have already tried a couple of recipes from the preview pages on over this past weekend. Once again, the results were fantastic. The Blueberry Muffins with the Almond Streusel have an incredible depth of flavor, mostly due to resting the batter in the refrigerator overnight. The Oatmeal Raisin Cookies have a flavor profile that is nearly identical to the scrumptious boxed mix sold at Williams Sonoma. As with the other Keller books I own, the recipes are thorough, precise and often time-consuming. So, planning and moderate skills are essential when executing these culinary treats. However, you will be delighted with the end results.***UPDATE 10/29/2012***Over the weekend, I have completed a couple more recipes from Bouchon Bakery. First up is the Banana Muffins with Walnut Streusel topping. Since this recipe calls for cr me fra che, I started a couple of days ahead and made my own. I also went shopping for bananas that would be perfectly ripe in time to make the batter Friday afternoon. As with the Blueberry Muffins, this batter rests in the refrigerator overnight. The result is a moist and delicate crumb unlike most banana breads which can be dense and dry. The walnut streusel was a perfect crunchy compliment to the moist muffins. Another A+ recipe. Next on the list to try was the Double Chocolate Chunk and Chip Cookies. This recipe calls for chocolate and a lot of it. I used Valrhona cocoa, Scharffen Berger 62% semisweet chocolate chunks and Ghirardelli semisweet chocolate chips. They were perfect still slightly warm from the oven. This is a chocolate lover's dream cookie! I plan to move on to breads next. Will it be Brioche, Sourdough or Croissants? Decisions, decisions.***UPDATE 11/18/2012***I decided to tackle one of the most intimidating recipes a home baker can face. Croissants! A few years ago, I traveled to Paris for the first time. My first taste of an authentic croissant was at Ladur e, a

famous parisian tea salon and patisserie. The experience of walking along the Seine, pulling apart the buttery layers and the crisp outer crust crumbling as I bit into it is now a part of who I am. As Chef Keller describes in the book, once you have had a croissant in Paris, it changes you. Now, I was somewhat skeptical that this magic could be reproduced by the home baker. Even looking at the amazing photos in the book, with all the beautiful and distinct layers, it seemed doubtful this could be achieved in a home kitchen without a professional dough sheeter. My doubts were completely flattened. This recipe for traditional croissants is a masterpiece! The aroma that fills the kitchen while these are baking is unbelievable and every buttery, golden layer of the laminated dough is visible. The crusty shell disintegrates when you bite into it and the soft, airy interior almost melts in your mouth. Perfection! ***UPDATE 4/21/2013*** Croissants Revisited. Although I was very pleased with the results of my first attempt at the traditional croissants recipe, I have spent some time thinking of ways to improve my results. The main obstacle I face is a very cold kitchen, which can make proofing difficult. Normally, I use the "raising bread" setting on my oven for breads and doughs. But at 100° F, this would melt the butter in a croissant dough. The solution I chose was to use heating pads under the storage container proofing box to provide warmth. I placed a wire rack on top of the heating pad to elevate the sheet pans of croissants and covered everything with the plastic tub. It worked perfectly, so I wanted to share this for others who may have cold kitchens. I will upload a photo of this proofing method. The second obstacle was the egg wash. I thought my results were too streaky. After reading that most bakeries use commercial sprayers to apply egg wash, I decided to try it using a cheap spray bottle. I used an immersion blender to get the eggs as smooth as possible before passing them through a fine mesh strainer and into the spray bottle. The result was a more even browning than my prior attempt. I have uploaded a photo of the results. Also, the freezing and refreshing methods in the book work perfectly. I have defrosted some of the croissants and they were as good as the day they were baked. Oatmeal Raisin Cookies Revisited. Of all the recipes in the book, I think I have made the Oatmeal Raisin Cookies more than any other. I usually make the smaller version, 72 grams, so there are more to share. I have made a few mistakes that I thought I would share that may help some. The recipe suggests soaking the raisins in hot water for 30 minutes, if they are not plump. The recipe also states they should be drained and patted dry. After I drain the raisins, I place them in a bowl lined with paper towels and press them as dry as possible without crushing them. If they are too wet, the cookies may spread too much when baking. Also, if your oven has the convection feature, use it! As written in the book, the cookies do not spread as much when baked in a convection oven. But trust me, they taste equally delicious either way. Yesterday, I decided to make the Bouchon-sized version, 145 grams. They were big and

thick, crisp on the outside and chewy on the inside. Definitely my favorite way to prepare these cookies! Pictures going up now.

As with all of Thomas Keller's previous books, this one combines beautiful layout and photography, delicious recipes, invaluable instructions, and entertaining storytelling. I think this is probably the most accessible of Keller's books, but that does not mean it's dumbed down at all. It's perfect for an absolute beginner baker or an advanced baker. Most of the recipes are simple enough for a beginner to follow along and make successfully, but the instructions and notes are thorough enough for even the most skilled bakers to learn something new. My favorite thing about Bouchon Bakery is that all recipes list ingredients by both weight (in grams) and volume. If you've been resisting buying a kitchen scale, just do it already. As Keller explains in the book, compared to measuring ingredients by volume using measuring cups and spoons, weighing your ingredients is 1) more accurate 2) faster [just tare your scale and measure in the same bowl] 3) cleaner [just the one bowl to clean; no cups or spoons to dirty], and 4) easier to scale recipes up or down [which is easier: halving 200 grams or halving 1 1/3 cups + 2 tablespoons + 1/2 teaspoon?]. So make your life a lot easier and your baking a lot better and just order a scale on when you get this book; you can get one for less than \$20, which is less than it costs for a good set of measuring cups and spoons. You'll need a scale that measures in 0.1 gram increments. As for the content, the book is divided into sections on cookies, scones and muffins, cakes, tarts, pate a choux, brioche and doughnuts, puff pastry and croissants, breads, and confections. It covers the whole range of sweet and savory baking, and so far every recipe has been excellent. Many of the recipes are inspired by or are improvements on cookies and treats that were some of your favorites as a kid, like Nutter Butters, Oreos, Ho Hos, etc. And honestly, to say they are improvements is a massive understatement--they're more like complete reworkings, complete with Keller's unique brand of sophistication. Take the TKO cookie, Keller's take on the Oreo. Instead of the Oreo's bland, chalky cookie and white mystery filling, the Bouchon Bakery version uses chocolate shortbread filled with a white chocolate ganache. I've made nearly all of the cookies in the book, and they're about as close as possible in taste and appearance to the ones you buy at Bouchon Bakery, and a whole lot cheaper! The brioche is outstanding, and is a lifesaver if you live in an area where store-bought brioche is unavailable (and if it is, this one is probably better!). The muffins are also winners, much more moist and flavorful than any other recipe I've used (one of the tricks is letting the batter sit overnight so that the flour fully hydrates). So far my favorite section has been the scones. If you think you don't like scones or that they're nothing special, just try the ones in this book. Ever other scone

I've either made or bought has been either fairly bland or pretty dry; these scones are full of flavor and incredibly moist and buttery. Particularly the cherry chocolate chip scones and the bacon cheddar chives scones. Especially the latter--there are no words that can do justice to how extraordinary they are. They're also incredibly convenient, since one of the required steps is to freeze the scones before baking, and you can store them for at least a month in the freezer before baking. Since they bake directly from the freezer, if you want an easy, fresh, and delicious breakfast, just stick a frozen scone in the oven and you'll be greatly rewarded 30 minutes later. I also really appreciate that they've put so much effort and research into the bread section, especially on how to get good steam injection into the oven. This is probably the only baking book I've seen that departs from the standard "pour some water into a hot pan in the oven to make steam" technique. Having steam in the oven when baking bread is necessary for a thin caramelized crust; if you've ever made bread that had a dull, chalky, thick, and hard crust, it's probably because of a lack of steam. The weakness of the traditional steaming method is that it doesn't produce a whole lot of steam and it cools your oven down tremendously. The method described in Bouchon Bakery is designed to correct these flaws and involves rocks, chains, and a Super Soaker water gun. Yes, really! It's been my experience that most baking books fall into one of two categories: 1) a recipe book without much information about technique, background, theory, etc, or 2) a very technical treatise with unexciting or not very good recipes. Bouchon Bakery achieves the perfect balance, I think. The recipes in Bouchon Bakery are absolutely incredible, and the information in each section helps you to improve your technique and will help you to understand why you're performing certain steps, how to make your baking better, and what has likely gone wrong in your previous baking mishaps.

If you're worried you'll lose some aspects of the book and it won't translate well to a Kindle version, don't be. It's much easier to bring my tablet in the kitchen and follow the recipe than it is to bring a large bulky book and the recipe formatting holds no matter how you have it. As for the actual content of the book, it'll make you a better baker. Before I purchased this book, I had only ever baked cupcakes and simple cookies. The best part is that the instructions are so detailed that I know WHY it's the best and can apply that to recipes I already have in my kitchen. The recipes can call for some pretty specific equipment but there are ways around it. The drawback is that they're not necessarily going to be the ones to tell you. For instance, I don't have a quarter sheet pan, which is required for the Olive Oil Cake. But I have an 8-inch cake pan. It works just the same, except the baking time will be a little longer. Some

of the other recipes I probably can't substitute something else, like the Madeleines that have a very specific shape. But most recipes can be tweaked to work well in my poorly equipped kitchen.

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