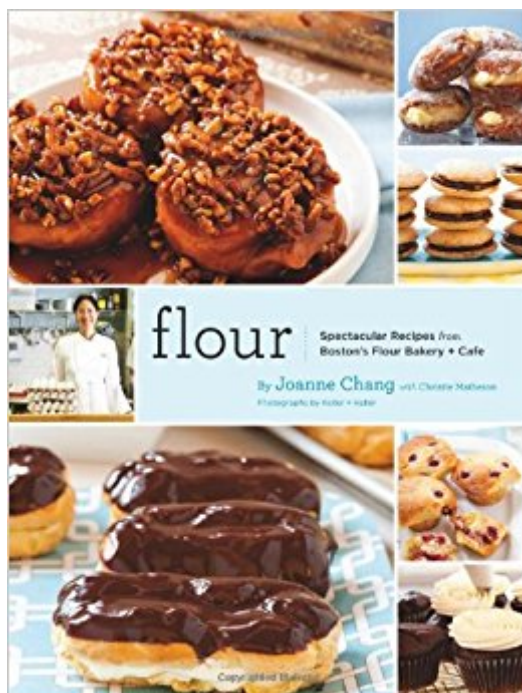


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Flour: Spectacular Recipes From Boston's Flour Bakery + Cafe



Synopsis

Every day 1,500 Bostonians can't resist buying sweet, simple treats such as Homemade Pop-Tarts, from an alumna of Harvard with a degree in economics. From Brioche au Chocolat and Lemon Raspberry Cake to perfect croissants, Flour Bakery-owner Joanne Chang's repertoire of baked goods is deep and satisfying. While at Harvard she discovered that nothing made her happier than baking cookies leading her on a path that eventually resulted in a sticky bun triumph over Bobby Flay on the Food Network's Throwdown. Almost 150 Flour recipes such as Milky Way Tart and Dried Fruit Focaccia are included, plus Joanne's essential baking tips, making this mouthwatering collection an accessible, instant classic cookbook for the home baker.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's hard to believe that Flour is Joanne Chang's first book, because the level of mastery, precision and experience in it make it feel like the work of someone who's been showing new bakers the light and the way for a very long time. --NPR, Ten Best Books of 2010
Pop Tarts, anyone? Clearly written and beautifully photographed, Flour is a baker's treat. --Dorie Greenspan

Joanne Chang is the chef-owner of Flour Bakery in Boston. She has a degree in applied mathematics and economics from Harvard University and was a pastry chef at Payard Patisserie and Mistral. She lives in Boston. Christie Matheson is the author or co-author of several books, including Salty Sweets. She lives in Boston and San Francisco. Keller + Keller are Boston-based food and lifestyle photographers.

The book begins with a baking overview of sorts. It gives an explanation of techniques that will be used throughout the book. Then, it goes over baking equipment. Next, the book has a short discussion of ingredients. The section on ingredients offers quite a bit of information on things like the right temperature for the ingredients and reasons why unsalted butter is better than salted butter in the recipes. After that, the book has Joanne's Top 12 Baking Tips with explanations for each tip. The author also has quite a few explanations on the science behind the tip or technique throughout the book. The book covers breakfast treats, cookies, cakes, pies & tarts, other sweets, and breads. Each chapter has popular treats (i.e. red velvet cake, sticky buns, and chocolate chunk cookies, which are wonderful) and also has more unique recipes, too (i.e. hazelnut-almond dacquoise, lemon marshmallow meringue pie, and rosemary shortbread). There are also recipes to make homemade versions of popular, American treats, such as oreos, pop tarts, and fig newtons. One downside to this book is that there are few pictures. For example, only about four of the twenty-five recipes in the cookie section have a picture, which is a shame because the pictures in the book are beautiful. One note - the carrot cake recipe calls for baking the cupcakes for 50 minutes, but mine were done after 25 minutes. I'm not sure whether that was a typo or whether I just have a hot oven.*Update 11/7/10*

The chocolate chunk cookies were some of the best chocolate chip cookies that I've ever made. I also really liked the Chunky Lola cookies. The surprise hit so far, though, was the cornmeal lime cookies. They were surprisingly addictive and the perfect end to a Latin-flavored meal.*Update 12/13/10*

I took this cookbook home for the holidays. We made a huge batch of the sticky sticky buns, and they were incredibly rich and so yummy. They taste like a cross between a honey bun and a traditional sticky bun. A couple notes - One, you may want to put a cookie sheet under the rolls as they cook. We had quite a mess to clean up when the goo from one of the rolls bubbled over. Second, baking the rolls in a glass pan seemed to help them cook more evenly than baking them in a metal pan.*Update 1/27/11*

After reading reviews of other cookbooks on here, I felt that I should note that this book has the ingredients listed by weight and by volume (i.e. grams and cups). I know that a lack of weight measurements can be a make or break issue for some people with a cookbook, so I wanted to make it clear that this book does have measurements listed both ways.

My baking experience is at a novice level but I wanted to make cupcakes from scratch and found this book. I have had the book for a while now and have made the following recipes: Basic Brioche, Cream Puffs, Chocolate Cupcakes with Crispy Magic Frosting, and Rosemary and Olive Oil Focaccia. All, with the exception of the cream puffs, have turned out absolutely, perfectly delicious! I have yet to figure out what has gone wrong with the cream puff pastry but the cream was very tasty.

I was particularly impressed with the basic brioche as I was completely unfamiliar with brioche. I'd never heard of it, seen or eaten it so I had no idea what it corrected looked or tasted like. I followed the directions and got the most wonderful treat! It was perfect. Ms. Chang's instructions are clear, concise, and detailed and if followed will produce a beautiful product! I recommend reading her helpful tips at the front of the book. I also suggest using King Arthur Flour. This is the flour she uses in her bakery. I used a few different brands but can taste a difference! As far as the yeast I have used both the cake and dry packaged in the focaccia and cannot tell a difference. I also suggest weighing the ingredients if you have a scale. One change I did make is with the second focaccia I made I omitted the corn meal. I did not like the texture. I oiled my entire sheet pan very well and had no problem. The focaccia sled right off onto the cutting board. Unlike with some cookbooks (of which I own several) there is a good variety of recipes in this book. I'm excited to try the "New Tiramisu", "Mom's Granola," all of the muffins, scones and breads to mention a few. Actually, this book, in my opinion, is so good that I may try them all! I really believe this book is should be in anyone's kitchen who has a desire to fill their home with a pleasant aroma and the tummies of family and friends with eatable love! Bon Appetite!

I originally received this book from a friend at my bridal shower and in the past few years have purchased an additional three copies for others as gifts. It is an EXCELLENT book! I have made about half of the more than 100 recipes (you definitely get your money's worth!) and am delighted to say that nearly all of them turn out delicious with compliments. Joanne Chang has a very easygoing and fun writing style, and many of her recipes are things that we have had, but don't know how to make (for example, a simplified puff pastry). A few recipes are complicated or time consuming (dacoise, eclairs, brioche) and most require a stand mixer or at the very least a hand mixer. She does use a few harder to find ingredients: creme fraiche in many recipes and hazelnuts in a few, but it is worth seeking these ingredients out to make these delectable treats. For example, my FAVORITE is the milk chocolate hazelnut cookies - easy and AMAZING!. One other comment: she uses butter like it's going out of style - I've found in most recipes I can cut the butter back by a few tablespoons. In all, this book is FULL of fantastic recipes that are worth trying. Chances are you'll make them again and again at the request of family members and/or coworkers (New Tiramisu, granola bars, chocolate hazelnut cookies, cornmeal lime cookies, chocolate and cream filled brioche, etc). With a little common sense (knowing when to cut back on the butter, for example), you'll create treats that are just as good as those that line bakery and restaurant cases. :)

Many good baking hints. I read the book cover to cover. She's quite a girl, and I need to visit one of her shops. My granddaughter baked every item in the Flour I book when she was 16, and she had no rejects. The recipes are easy to follow.

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