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Standard Baking Co. Pastries



Synopsis

Standard Baking Co. is Maine's most well-known bakery. Located directly across from Portland's harbor, the bakery is a daily hub for hundreds of people. From almond croissants to butter cookies to a pear frangipane tart, more than 60 coveted recipes comprise this cookbook tailor written for the home baker. Never before has Standard Baking Co. divulged its sweet secrets - this cookbook is sure to become a baking bible for Standard fans and newcomers alike.

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Customer Reviews

This cookbook has well written explanations and recipes that come out true to expectations (if you have been to the bakery) or otherwise very well (read: delicious). I have been to the Standard Baking Co. bakery a handful of times, and love their brownies. In truth, the brownies were the reason I wanted to get the cookbook. However, I have been extremely satisfied with all the recipes I have tried so far, including the brownie recipe. In addition to the fact that the recipes work and are delicious, they are not too involved: no esoteric techniques that I've come across so far, and any more complicated processes are well explained. I highly recommend this cookbook as a source for excellent sweet pastry recipes (not including frosted cakes). More details below if you want: The book contains mostly sweet pastry recipes: croissants/scones/coffee cake like pastries, then tarts, then "cakes" and cookies. There is also a small section of savory and snack items (like granola bars). The "cakes" section contains brownies, bundt cakes, tea cakes and the like - no frosted airy cakes or anything like that, a fact that they point out in their commentary as their bakery does not have a refrigerated case. There are also no bread recipes. I have tried three of the four pastry dough

recipes (the sweet, perfect and rustic tart pastries - there is a chocolate pastry recipe I have yet to try) and am so happy with them I am going to adopt them as my standby pie doughs. I was very impressed with them for three reasons, 1) two of the recipes (the sweet and perfect) use a stand mixer which worked surprisingly well and I found to be easier than 'cutting' the butter into the flour and less hassle than blending in the food processor, not to mention the results were wonderful; 2) all of the doughs came out very well, and; 3) all of the doughs came out very differently: the sweet dough is like a cookie crust, the 'perfect' dough is light and flaky, almost like a puff pastry except without the height, and the rustic dough is just that, lots of rough character and flavor in a crisp and crumbly crust. The tarts I made with the doughs were also very good. The Irish whiskey chocolate tarts are deadly - extremely rich, tender and chocolaty. The 'perfect' pastry that goes with it both balances the chocolate flavor and also helps it stand out through the flavor contrast. The frangipane is lovely but intense and very buttery. This is the only recipe I probably won't make again, but not because I don't like it. I have another recipe that I prefer because it is more subtle. However, I will always use the poached pear recipe from this book for any frangipane I do, as it intensifies the pear flavor. Finally, the rustic apple tart has become our new apple pie standby, and my husband has stated that it the best tart he's ever had. Finally, the brownies. I made these the day before yesterday, and they did not disappoint. They are as rich and decadent as the ones you buy at the bakery. They say in the recipe description that while everyone goes back and forth about cake-like brownies versus fudge-like brownies, these brownies are simply the best. I completely agree. The density and texture are very pleasing, however when you eat one of these brownies those thoughts only come after the pure chocolate bliss passes. These brownies are beyond cake-like or fudge-like being a concern. I don't usually write reviews, but have been so impressed with this cookbook I was compelled to do so. It has been rare for me to find a cook book where the recipes come out consistently well. If you are looking for a collection of delicious pastry recipes, then this is the book for you.

From the ones I've tried so far (caramel apple tart, brownies), these are good recipes. It's annoying, however, that the recipes provide only the measure of each ingredient, and not the weight, except for the croissant recipe. If you buy your butter in a 1 lb. block, it's pretty hard to figure out 3/4 cup plus 2 T., or 1 1/3 stick. You have no choice but to convert to weight. And pros measure ingredients by weight only anyway. You know from the precision and industry that they already had the weight, and converted to measure for the home baker, but did not leave the weights in as an alternative means of measuring the ingredients out, like the best baking books. Too bad, it would have made

the book easier to use for a broader audience.

When we last visited the Standard Baking Company (a must whenever we are in Portland) I was overjoyed to see this little book, listing a recipe for the very rugalachs we just bought. Many cookbooks, written by (or, in many case, probably ghost-written by) famous restaurant owners or chefs, contain dumbed-down versions of their signature dishes, omitting just those ingredients or tweaks that make these items so popular (try to find the original Sachertorte recipe in Hotel Sacher's pastry book!). The authors of "Pastries" are courageous and generous enough to give you the real deal! So far I baked rugalachs and croissants, also the almond croissant variation. The instructions are detailed, and easy to follow, and the results outstanding! The book's layout is clean and pleasing, and easy to work with. The matte paper that one reviewer attributed to the publishers need to save a buck (have you ever seen their gorgeous glossy "DownEast Magazine"?), contributes, in my opinion, to the book's attractive look, indicating that it's meant for the kitchen, and not the tea table. As a European, I would have liked to see also weight measurements in all recipes, but this is a minor gripe compared to the overall quality of "Pastries".

Baked two recipes, Gingerbread and Wild Blueberry Oat Scones. The verdict for both has been a definite yes. Made the Gingerbread in six 1 cup bundt pans, instead of the recommended 6 cup pan, thus had to add another ½ tsp baking soda (See Beranbaum's Cake Bible page 492, text and baking powder amounts table) and baked them for 25 minutes. See picture above. The dessert was delicious without being overly sweet. Presentation was nice but would have been better if I had followed the directions of sifting the confectionary sugar so as not to end up with a lumpy lemon glaze. Homemade meyer lemon marmalade made a delicious accompaniment. The Wild Blueberry Oat Scones were made with commercial blueberries and I made 14 instead of 9 scones. The scones were more cake-like, and definitely not flaky. But they were very tasty and somewhat addictive. I bake by weight, not volume. This book is by volume only. But the authors do tell how to measure the flour. So using their method, I converted 1c of flour to 130g of unbleached flour. After making the two recipes, I realized that the croissant recipe (I did not look at the recipe because Tartine's croissant recipe makes the most perfect croissants for me) has both volume and weight. The croissant dough uses 140g per 1c unbleached flour. But because both recipes worked so well with 130g, I think I will stay with that. Look forward to trying more recipes.

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