



# B

## BAKING WITH BUTTER

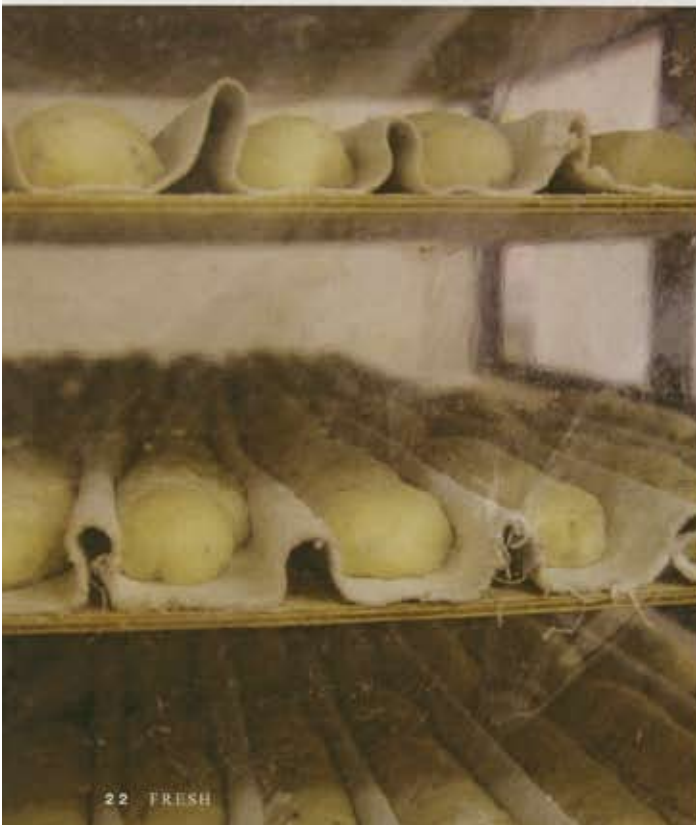
THE INGREDIENTS ARE SO BASIC ... FLOUR, WATER, BUTTER, YEAST AND PERHAPS A TOUCH OF SUGAR. COMBINED IN VARIOUS RATIOS, YOU CAN GET A DUMPLING, A DINNER ROLL, A CAKE LAYER. IN THE HANDS OF A MASTER, YOU GET A BUTTER-RICH CROISSANT.



GEORGE DEPASQUALE,  
FOUNDER, OWNER  
AND HEAD BAKER OF  
ESSENTIAL BAKING  
COMPANY IN SEATTLE.



AT THE ESSENTIAL BAKING COMPANY IN SEATTLE, no semblance of will power can be expected. Few can resist the lure of the 23 different varieties of rustic, naturally cultured, hearth-baked bread. If they do, they will crumble at the sight of the artisan crackers, biscotti and handcrafted desserts. Only the mighty can pass over a fresh-baked croissant. ✦ Founder, owner and head baker George DePasquale still spends his days alongside his team shaping raw dough and pulling crusty loaves from the brick ovens. The company was founded on principles of hard work and ethics. National acclaim hasn't changed that a bit. DePasquale still insists that flours are certified organic and local farmers, like Darigold's, supply as much of the product as possible.





IS FOR CROISSANT

## A CROISSANT IS THE PINNACLE OF THE BAKER'S ART.

It is crisp, flaky, tender, chewy and moist all at once. The proper handling and distribution of butter is crucial. It must be cold, but malleable, so bakers pound it by hand on a tabletop. Done right, the cold butter and the bread dough will stay separate and form layers as the dough is repeatedly folded. If the butter is too warm or starts to get oily, it will melt and saturate the starch particles, making the bread spongy and cake-like. When baked, trapped air and moisture expand, stretching the flexible dough. The heat of the oven causes the dough to eventually stiffen, solidifying into rich, buttery sheets. Simplified, it is the same principle used for making flaky piecrust and puff pastry. Natural sugars and proteins interact with the heat, causing the exposed surfaces to brown to a nutty, dark crust. In the oven, the heat gives a jolt to the flavoring agents, increasing the aromas to the point that anyone who walks within sniffing distance will instantly succumb. ✦ Rogerio Martinho, head pastry chef at Essential, explains that in Europe, tradition dictates that you must only use the best, local ingredients. The distinguishing flavors, or *terroir*, of a dish are characteristic of the region from which it comes. So in his mind's eye, to make the most authentic French croissant in Seattle, he can't use French ingredients shipped halfway around the globe. He must use Darigold butter, produced by local farmers and churned in Issaquah, Washington. Since the butter is naturally sweet, he feels he can use less sugar in the finished product. And let's face it, sugar in baked goods of this quality ... is icing on the cake.



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## IS FOR BUTTER

A slice of freshly baked bread—crunchy, chewy and rich with flavors of the field and the sun. Such perfection is only improved with a smear of fresh butter. Garden vegetables—tender green beans, sweet baby carrots or a cob of newly shucked corn. These natural gems need nothing but a quick swim in boiling water and a generous pat of melting butter.


Why is it that even foods that look perfect at first glance seem almost naked without a touch of butter? There are certainly some subliminal and societal responses involved. Buttered food historically involves good times, richness and plenty. There is also a certain sensual appeal. Cold butter melts below body temperature, so, as with chocolate, there is the thrill of a solid transforming to liquid at your touch. In addition, there is a velvety mouthfeel, a hint of salt, and that subtle nuance of green pastures and fresh air.

Unlike margarine, butter is a natural product made by churning or shaking cream until it reaches a semi-solid state. Margarine is made from a single oil, or blend of oils, including animal and vegetable fats. By definition, butter must be made exclusively from milk, cream or both and contain at least 80% milk fat by weight. One pound of butter represents the amount of cream

found in approximately ten to eleven quarts of fresh milk. Sometimes, simple salt is added.

There are two main types of butter produced in the United States: sweet-cream butter and cultured-cream butter. Sweet-cream butter is by far the most popular in the United States and includes lightly salted, unsalted and whipped varieties. Cultured butter is popular in Europe. It is developed by culturing the cream (as with yogurt) before churning, and can be found in some specialty grocery stores.

Salt is added to butter for flavor, but it also works as a gentle preservative. Lightly salted butter is best as table butter and for general cooking. Unsalted butter is primarily used for baking. Because butter is a natural product, its performance in cooking and baking is unduplicated. It naturally enhances the flavor of food and provides a creamy, rather than oily, texture.

A row of six uncooked croissants is laid out on a dark, slightly textured surface. The croissants are pale yellow and have a classic crescent shape with visible layers of dough. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the dough. The background is dark and out of focus, making the croissants stand out.

IN THE OVEN,  
THE HEAT GIVES  
A JOLT TO THE  
FLAVORING  
AGENTS,  
INCREASING THE  
AROMAS TO THE  
POINT THAT  
ANYONE WHO  
WALKS WITHIN  
SNIFFING DISTANCE  
WILL INSTANTLY  
SUCCUMB.