



My Bread: The Revolutionary No-Work, No-Knead Method

Jim Lahey , Rick Flaste (Contributor)

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When he wrote about Jim Lahey's bread in the *New York Times*, Mark Bittman's excitement was palpable: "The loaf is incredible, a fine-bakery quality, European-style boule that is produced more easily than by any other technique I've used, and it will blow your mind." Here, thanks to Jim Lahey, New York's premier baker, is a way to make bread at home that doesn't rely on a fancy bread machine or complicated kneading techniques. Witnessing the excitement that Bittman's initial piece unleashed worldwide among bakers experienced and beginner alike, Jim grew convinced that home cooks were eager for a no-fuss way to make bread, and so now, in this eagerly anticipated collection of recipes, Jim shares his one-of-a-kind method for baking rustic, deep-flavored bread in your own oven.

The secret to Jim Lahey's bread is slow-rise fermentation. As Jim shows in *My Bread*, with step-by-step instructions followed by step-by-step pictures, the amount of labor you put in amounts to 5 minutes: mix water, flour, yeast, and salt, and then let time work its magic—no kneading necessary. Wait 12 to 18 hours for the bread to rise, developing structure and flavor; then, after another short rise, briefly bake the bread in a covered cast-iron pot.

The process couldn't be more simple, or the results more inspiring. *My Bread* devotes chapters to Jim's variations on the basic loaf, including an olive loaf, pecorino cheese bread, pancetta rolls, the classic Italian baguette (*stirato*), and the stunning bread stick studded with tomatoes, olives, or garlic (*stecca*). He gets even more creative with loaves like Peanut Butter and Jelly Bread, others that use juice instead of water, and his Irish Brown Bread, which calls for Guinness stout. For any leftover loaves, Jim includes what to do with old bread (try bread soup or a chocolate torte) and how to make truly special sandwiches.

And no book by Jim Lahey would be complete without his Sullivan Street Bakery signature, pizza Bianca—light, crispy flatbread with olive oil and rosemary that Jim has made even better than that of Italy's finest bakeries. Other pizza recipes, like a *pomodoro* (tomato), only require you to spread the risen dough across a baking sheet and add toppings before baking.

Here—finally—Jim Lahey gives us a cookbook that enables us to fit quality bread into our lives at home.

My Bread: The Revolutionary No-Work, No-Knead Method Details

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Lisa says

I have only baked the first master recipe and the book is worth 5 stars just from that. This book has earned a spot on my cookbook shelf just as soon as I place my next Amazon order. The bread I baked last night was one of the best loaves I've ever produced in my home kitchen. It is also better than those that I've eaten at any bakery or restaurant. The crust was crisp, crackly, and SO unbelievably flavorful! The crumb was delightful too - moist and springy, with irregular holes just as it should be and it didn't taste overly yeasty as many breads can. I left the dough to rise 24 hours during its first rise due to being stuck in a car on icy DC roads when I should have been tending to the bread but I think I will do it this way from now on in the winter because it was that good! I was amazed at how well the bread baked in the pot (never baked bread in a pot like this - I used a square covered Le Crueset and was skeptical but it was amazing!). There was SO LITTLE hands-on time that it was ridiculous. Ridiculously easy.

Why did I wait so long to try this??! WHY? I could have been tinkering all these years with more whole wheat based on this method perfecting a good no-knead wheat bread. Ugh, I could just kick myself. Instead, I think I will just mix up another batch of dough tomorrow!

I mean, I heard the crust SING (which I learned is the sound when the bread cools on the rack and goes through its last cooking stages and the crust actually crackles - it was so cool to hear, though I probably looked silly to anyone that could have seen me with my ear hovering one inch from my freshly-baked loaf of bread for 5 minutes)!! Lahey made me feel like a bread goddess. Thank you thank you thank you, Mr. Lahey!!!

Lori D'Alba says

Bread is amazing. Try the pizza recipes - dough takes about 3 hours with minimal hands on time. We literally had cauliflower pizza 4 days in a row, it was that good.

Elaine Fong says

Lahey's simple no-knead technique has raised my quality life by 50% and lowered my bread cost by more, in a city where quality artisan bread is pricey and hard to find. We've had to tinker with his recipes, as we live in the tropics, but the basic recipe is surprisingly forgiving and quick. I prepared the dough in minutes while my breakfast coffee brews, then let it proof for 24 hours. I've varied the proportion of bread flour with various multigrains, rye flours and wholemeal, added seeds, and will continue to try other ingredients (bacon and red onions are high on this list). I'm late to this no-knead game as this book is from 2009 and the NY Times video with Mark Bittman is now over 10 yrs old, but better late than never. For me, this method has been revolutionary, and Lahey's book is the manifesto. He, literally wrote THE book. Will read his book on pizza next.

Helana Brigman says

Worth Reading from Cover to Cover: Garrett McCord (of Vanilla Garlic) notes that a good cookbook should keep you up at night. Good cookbooks should be read from cover-to-cover, savored, and enjoyed. I honestly believe that any foodie interested—if only relatively—in bread making were to purchase this book for the simple \$19.77 over at Amazon, they would stay up the first night reading not just the recipes, but Lahey's relationship to them. So yes, Lahey is great and one of the best parts of the book. Plus, the recipes from Lahey's Sullivan Street Bakery menu are an added bonus—"Marinated Eggplant," Pizzas, and Sandwiches all make My Bread an exceptional bread making cook book. - See more at: <http://www.clearlydeliciousfoodblog.c...>

Dolly says

Several years ago (2010), I read about this bread recipe published in the New York Times and was intrigued by the idea of not needing to knead it. I tried versions of it until I was baking bread much more often than my waistline liked.

I never cooked it in a dutch oven (didn't have one), but still got delicious results. I also used the book Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day: The Discovery That Revolutionizes Home Baking as a reference and I loved making homemade bread for my family.

Eventually I stopped and went back to buying bread pretty much exclusively from the grocery store. But I knew that baking homemade bread, rolls and pizza dough wasn't hard to do, and in fact it was a bit addicting.

I recently read Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation by Michael Pollan and was inspired to get back into baking bread and exploring the bounds of yeast fermentation. His ability to show how the elements of earth, air, fire and water can be integrated into homemade delicious food is very fascinating.

Also, our youngest daughter expressed interest in baking bread, and I thought I'd revisit the no-knead concept to help her along. I borrowed this book from our local library and started drooling at the wonderful pictures of yummy bread.

So I wrapped myself into a warm blanket on the couch in front of a roaring fire on a cold freeing rain-kind of day and read this book pretty much cover to cover. I love that he includes so many different recipes for breads as well as foods to make with breads (as soup, sandwiches, pizza, dessert etc.) Heaven.

When I mentioned this book and the recipe for no-knead bread, our youngest groused that the kneading is what she likes. *"The best parts of baking bread are the kneading and the eating."* So we resorted to the internet to find a simple, basic bread recipe that allowed her an opportunity to knead to her heart's content.

We used this recipe, which makes one loaf and is very easy for a beginner. I will note that I made a couple of substitutions, as recommended in the comment section of the recipe, using olive oil instead of shortening and about a half cup of whole wheat flour in place of some of the white flour to add a bit more substance to the bread; we also mixed the wet ingredients first with the yeast, then added them to the dry - flour and salt.

The bread was delicious and I think I have an amateur baker on my hands. My oldest has no interest in baking bread, but she did help me roast some garlic to spread on top of the freshly sliced bread. Now I truly know why we had children. (only partly kidding....)

We pretty much destroyed the whole loaf in one meal and I'm sure that our daughter will want to make this again soon. I still want to get back to the recipes in this book and I'm seriously considering purchasing a covered 5qt cast iron dutch oven, but still haven't gotten around to it yet. I know that I will use it for other types of cooking, but I think I'm still a bit afraid that we'll get too used to making warm, delicious bread on a much-too-frequent basis.

I doubt that any of us will cook professionally, but with reference books like this, you really can create a lovely bread that is so much better (and probably healthier) than what you buy at the store. Yum.

D says

Wheeeeeee! I'd been hearing about Jim Lahey and his no-knead bread for just about forever (read: perhaps a year), when just the other day a Lodge dutch oven and a copy of his book showed up in the mail, thanks to 'Netta. I just finished reading it and plan to start baking posthaste. But this book is more than just a fabulous, fool-proof (or so he claims), low-labor method for baking delicious, bakery-quality breads in your own kitchen: he also lovingly and precisely discusses the Italian tradition of bread and artisan labor and flavor pairings; and the second half of the book, after his many variations on the basic dough and technique, offers numerous fantastic panino recipes and creative uses for stale bread. I adore this book already, and I only cracked it open about an hour ago. After I've used some of the recipes I'll adjust my rating. Wheeeeeee!

UPDATE: the bread is PHENOMENAL. my husband, an italian and unabashed carb lover, says this is the best bread he's ever eaten. i make the basic recipes multiple times in any given month. just wonderful. i have tried a few of his sandwich and pizza recipes, and they're knockout. his flavor pairings are so carefully considered and measured; for sure follow his recipes to the letter the first time you prepare them; only thereafter allow yourself to improvise. because jim lahey's palate will educate yours.

the pizza dough recipe is easy and wonderful. i use it quite frequently with both his and my own toppings. a crisp, chewy crust that never becomes tough or dry.

Kandise says

Okay I don't really know how to review a cookbook but

1. Whatever the male version of a manic pixie dream girl is, that's Jim.
2. It gets pretty silly when it turns into sandwich recipes and that's where I stopped reading.
3. I've been making the basic bread for a few months now and it's freaking delicious.

Megan says

The bran-flecked loaf on the cover made me think that this was going to be a book mostly about baking bread, and that some decent portion of the bread recipes would involve whole-grains. Half the book is about

sandwiches, and the only "whole wheat" bread is a mere 25% whole wheat.

The bread portion of the book covers one leavening method, and a few different kinds of dough.

If you're interested in learning various ways to leaven no-knead bread (poolish, biga, natural yeast/sourdough), I highly recommend the detailed *Flour, Water, Salt, Yeast* by Ken Forkish.

If you're interested in having a large recipe collection of no-knead doughs, from 100% whole wheat to Pumpkin Brioche, and a variety of ways to bake them (loaves, bread sticks, crackers, pitas, stuffed loaves, doughnuts, etc), I highly recommend *Healthy Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day* by Jeff Hertzberg and Zoe Francois.

The sandwich fillings look interesting, but I wasn't looking for a sandwich book. Disappointing.

Bonnie Roman says

i have had this book on my to read-to buy list for a very long time. I bought *Artisan Bread in 5 Minutes a Day* over this one last summer. I finally picked this up at the library yesterday and read through it last night - who knew that the for the last several years I was using the Lahey method for bread making already! I should have gotten this book to begin with, as I never use the artisan Bread book recipes at all. I will be trying every single recipe in this book - and will be picking up my own copy asap. I now want to live on nothing but sandwiches after reading the sandwich chapter, and i have so many more ideas that I need to get to start on! If you read this book and use this method, one of my favorite things to do with this bread recipe is to substitute for the water - I will generally cook something like artichokes for dinner one night, then let the water boil down/reduce to the correct amount and use that in the bread in place of plain water. it adds a very nice depth of flavor and just something a little different.

Rosemarie says

I have been baking bread since I was very young. I was mostly happy with the results. I followed the videos on the net and made excellent bread but I am not into sour as much, but fantastic bread non the same. I found this book on their site, they are happy to share anything bread.

I got it from the library and I too was blown away with this bread. From start to finish I was mesmerized by this recipe. How can a bread turn out so lovely if it is so wet!

I made three loaves for a church function and they all loved it.

A visiting pastor came into the kitchen and requested that I make him this bread and that he would pay for it. Well I was flattered but declined much to his dismay.

I made a loaf of white, whole wheat and an olive one.

The book is not just about baking bread they have a host of other yummy recipes in the back of the book with what to do with your bread even after it is stale.

Take a good look at this book and make some bread, better yet let your 5 year old make it, that is how easy it is. I love this book.

Cynthia says

Wow. Amazing book. I took this out of the library, as I do with most cookbooks (who has room for all those cookbooks!?) but I think I'm going to have to buy this one. It's so inspiring; it's not just a cookbook, it's like a manifesto of bread AND self empowerment (and fun to read). Lahey gives really clear, easy to understand explanations of science and technique and there are excellent photos to help you along. I haven't tried the bread yet but ... this book is so good I almost don't care whether I'm able to cook it or not (altho i bet this is the book that finally turns me into a breadbaker. If you've ever wanted to bake bread but haven't been able to pull it off, this book could be the greatest thing for you since well, I wont make the cliche metaphor but you know what I mean.

Michelle says

I LOVE Jim Lahey's method. His was the recipe Mark Bittman made famous in the New York Times. I've made that bread at least a dozen times and it is my family's favorite. Now I got this book for Christmas and have many new variations to try! His bread is truly easy to make, costs very little, and is delicious and so satisfying. Thank you, Mr. Lahey!

Tracy says

So I've got this newly diagnosed soy allergy and pretty much every flipping thing on the supermarket shelves in the bread aisle has soy and consequently so does all the bread in nearly every restaurant out there. SO I have to make ALL of my bread from scratch. I've made bread from scratch for years but only when I want something special but if I have to do it all of the time, for everything, forever....I need some new techniques.

This book plus Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day allows me to make up large batches of dough of all kinds and then store them and make them fresh as needed for pizza, hamburger rolls, breakfast, etc. I could NOT believe how easy this technique is. Before I could afford a mixer, I made traditional bread doughs by hand and mixing them with a wooden spoon was HARD work. I mix these doughs without the aid of a mixer and they are EASY. (Even though I am 30 years older.) Anyone from beginner to experienced bread maker can use these recipes. If you are a beginner, follow the recipes exactly and you will make superb bread. If you have a grasp of the science/art of it all, you can use the recipes as a starting point and open up a whole new world of bread making.

Kimberly says

Lahey, a force in the no-knead bread movement, writes a book that is beautiful and informational. It's not my absolute favorite, as cast iron breadmaking is not my particular desire. However, his recipes are sound, accessible and fun. But, why am I giving this book 5 stars? Because, Lahey should seriously consider writing a sandwich book.

Read this book for Chapter 5: The Art of the Sandwich, period. Do not pass go, do not collect \$200 until you read it. It is absolutely stunning. His relation to great bread as a grand piano and the art of the sandwich as

the backing orchestra is beautiful (and so true)!

What I will find the most value in are the following recipes: Homemade Pickles, Homemade Spicy Mustard, Roasted Red Peppers and the jump off the page delicious sandwich creations photographed.

Overall, the photographs, method, recipes and ease of use make this a great book to add to your bread instruction collection.

Carrie says

I've been making this bread for years, but it was good to go straight to the source. Jim Lahey's book is a fascinating read - quite a feat for a cookbook! I can't wait to try his variations on the classic recipe, and have already made some of the accompaniments he suggests (the bruschetta is fabulous).
