



# The Violet Bakery Cookbook

*Claire Ptak*

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## **The Violet Bakery Cookbook** Claire Ptak

Violet is a bijou cake shop and café in Hackney, east London. The baking is done with simple ingredients including wholegrain flours, less refined sugars and the natural sweetness and muted colours of seasonal fruits. Everything is made in an open kitchen for people to see. Famed for its exquisite baked goods, Violet has become a destination.

Owner Claire Ptak uses her Californian sensibility to devise recipes that are both nourishing and indulgent. With real thought about taste and using the purest ingredients, she has created the most flavoursome iterations of classic cakes, as well as new treats for modern palates. Over 100 recipes include nourishing breakfasts, midday snacks, teatime treats, puddings to share, pantry preserves, and stylish celebration cakes. For example:

**Morning** – Buckwheat Granola or Cinnamon Buns

**Midday** – Squash, Brown Butter and Sage Quiche or Mozzarella, Rosemary and New Potato Tarts

**Teatime** – Butterscotch Blondie or Ginger Molasses Cake

**Desserts** – Cherry Cobbler or Fig Leaf Ice-cream

**Party Party** – Loganberry-vanilla Birthday Cake or Coconut-cream Trifle Cake

This book is about making baking worth it: simple to cook and satisfying to eat.

## **The Violet Bakery Cookbook Details**

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Author : Claire Ptak

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# From Reader Review The Violet Bakery Cookbook for online ebook

## Megan says

DISCLAIMER: I received this copy for review from NetGalley.

There's a really lovely forward by Alice Waters; if she approves of Claire Ptak (who worked at the venerable Chez Panisse), that's already a good thing in my book. There's mentions of Jaime Oliver and Ottolenghi, too; she doesn't do it to name-drop, but rather to talk about her influences and her career growth. Great start.

I completely agree with Ptak's perspective: taste should come before appearance. I hate it when it's any other way. Don't worry, the visuals aren't compromised; the photography is stunning, and there's shots of everyday life interwoven with all the food.

There were some recipes I probably wouldn't make, but I found very interesting: an apricot kernel cake with the kernel from the inside of an apricot actually in the cake, an ice cream with plum tree petals and fig leaf, as well as a grape, loganberry and violet icing. Definitely never seen any of these combos before.

Her apricot almond cornmeal muffins and braised fennel, olive and caper bread pudding have been bookmarked for later. Can't wait to try them out! Did I mention that her blondies have caramel in them?? And I promised myself that I'd be faithful to Joanne Chang (of Flour in Boston, MA fame)'s chocolate chip cookies, but these ones look so great and sound fabulously rich and dense and chewy from the yolks that I bet they'll sneak their way into my kitchen.

I saw a number of places that mentioned "tk cups" as a measurement. Not sure if that's a typo in all versions or just the ARC I saw, or if it's an actual measurement. A quick search led to a lot of results about K-cups. Um, not quite. This wasn't a huge deal, since there are grams included, so you can either use a scale (I still haven't been converted; there's always a ton of dead batteries whenever I seem to need to use the scale) or convert it into cups.

My major issue: everything sounded good, nothing sounded great. Nothing that made me want to run in the kitchen and bake now, responsibilities and commitments be damned. I'll try the ones I bookmarked eventually, but there isn't any sense of urgency.

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## M.L. says

Violet Bakery Cookbook – Claire Ptak. I read this courtesy of Netgalley.

This was a sparkling gem of a cookbook.

The intro by Alice Waters drew a word picture of the London Violet Bakery. Then the author gave some nice background info on her path to operating the Violet Bakery. A natural progression of some training led to doing stagings. What are stagings? Apparently, restaurants who encounter a cook who is simpatico with their style of cuisine, will invite that person to work in their kitchens for a short period of time. Then Claire did food stylings. After working at Alice Waters restaurant, she went to London, where she started baking out of her home and selling in a farmer's market. Finally she opened a shop.

Just before reading this cookbook I had begun a book by a doctor which bashed carbs/gluten. I was open to changing my intake of carbs and gluten but there were no appealing recipes in that book. One of the first recipes I saw in the Violet Bakery Cookbook was one for quinoa granola. Not presented as a health food bandaid, it was simply a recipe in this book that offers all kinds of baked goods recipes.

I loved the pictures, which were very casual chic. The recipes were arranged by: Morning, Mid-day, Afternoon (kind of tea time, which reminded me of the hobbits asking if Aragon had ever heard of second breakfast), Evening and Party Time. Besides the quinoa granola, I chose a few other recipes I will be giving a try. The prune oat and spelt scones where the prunes are soaked in earl grey tea sounded enticing. The strawberry/ginger/poppy seed scones; apple galette; chocolate/prune/ whiskey cake are also on my to-try list. In some cases, there are techniques/ingredients I just want to try – not the whole recipe. For instance, the author writes so well about the aromatic roasted fig leaves for a recipe that, although I won't attempt the recipe, I want to try roasting fig leaves just to see what they smell like. Oh, and I'll be using coffee in my confectioner sugar frostings in the future.

Even though most of the recipes are not gluten free, I would recommend this cookbook to people who want to try gluten free options. And regular cookbook collectors will enjoy this little gem since it presents recipes that are a little more than run-of-the-mill. These are very approachable ideas with a little twist.

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## **Madison says**

I found this to be an interesting cookbook. It felt like a mix between healthy and indulgent, artistic and homey and basic.

The recipes are divided into morning, midday, afternoon, evening and party. Each section is then divided again into subgroups, such as cookies and bars, tea and loaf cakes and tart in the afternoon section. Most of the recipes are sweets or baked good, but there are also a nice collection of quiches in the midday section.

There are some very interesting recipes in this book. Take the prune, oat and spelt scones or the chocolate oat agave cookies. I found that a number of the recipes would require a special trip to the shops, while others would be completely impractical for me, such as fig leaf ice cream. Other recipes were simpler and used basic ingredients, such as the chocolate sandwich cookies. But my favourite part of this book was the last two sections. The party party collection of recipes are indulgent and delicious, and I liked the range of icing recipes included, such as coconut milk or loganberry icing. The very last section was also helpful. Entitled The Violet Pantry, it includes basics such as making vanilla extract, candied citrus peel and a range of jams.

The publishers provided a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Find this review and more like it on my blog [Madison's Library](#).

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## **Belinda says**

4,25 stars - English hardcover -  
Enjoyed these recipes with other sugar suggestions.

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## **Janka H. says**

Next time I am in London i am definitely visiting Violet Bakery! All the recipes described just sounds very mouth-watering and after scrolling through the book pages one feels like he should bake any of the recipes! Also I love that the baking is unconventional, creative and using the cosmopolitan combinations (with a bit of preference towards the French "cuisine"). Also some of the recipes are gluten free and using different types of flour, which is welcome when one is on a healthy lifestyle train but still in for a treat. I will try for sure Bacon and egg buttermilk biscuits.

As for practicality, all the measurements are both in European and American way (grams vs. cups), so the book can reach wider audience. Authoress preaches the high quality ingredients and I agree. Authoress usually includes some tips or little stories into every recipe, which is a nice touch. I like to understand things, so some explanations helped me in knowing why "things" are behaving in certain way. Another kudos for photos, this is almost an art.

On the minus side, I think this is a book for quite experienced baker. The authoress is really trying to be helpful when explain, but this is for sure book for foodies. I would also love to have more preparation pictures - there are some accompanying some recipes, but i would welcome then with every recipes. I have said this is for foodies, haven't I? :)

All in all, the book is lovely. And as I said, I will visit Violet when in London - I might be not a foodie, but lover of a nice treat I am!

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## **Jillyn says**

I absolutely love this cookbook. It's vibrant, easy to follow, and full of amazing sounding recipes. The year is almost over, and this is so far one of the best cookbooks I've gotten to review in 2015.

It's sorted by the time of day and the type of event. There's also an introduction, a guide to a mise en place, tips, tasting tips, and even notes on foraging for fresher ingredients.

A nice touch to this book is the amount of personal stories that are inside. It makes the book clear that it's written as a labor of love, and that the authors really care about food and cooking. The directions are written concisely, and are easy to follow. That makes it pretty approachable for any skill level of cook. There's a nice blend of both sweet and savory recipes, which I wasn't expecting but nonetheless it is a pleasant surprise. There's also conversions on each recipe page for American use. I really appreciated this method, instead of shoving a chart in the back. This way, I wasn't constantly switching pages back and forth in order to know what I'm supposed to be doing.

The photography included in The Violet Bakery Cookbook is absolutely stunning. It's one of those books that's damn near art, it's aesthetically pleasing enough to just flip through and look at the pictures, if we're being honest. But just as importantly, there's also a lot of photos included. This is a huge plus for me- I don't buy a cookbook if I know there's little to no pictures inside. I like knowing how my food is supposed to look when it's finished!

I really like this book because there's a lot of elegant, light, and floral flavors. I love cooking with flower ingredients, and I'm happy to have more in my baking arsenal. The three dishes that I'm most excited to try from this book are: Honey and Rose Water Madeleines, Olive Oil Sweet Wine Cake, and Fig Leaf Ice Cream.

All in all, I think that this is a great baking book for anyone who likes to bake, no matter if it's sweet or savory. I look forward to using this for one of my teatime parties! I received a copy of this guide in exchange for my honest review.

This review can also be found on my blog, Bitches n Prose.

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### **Debbie says**

This lovely cookbook has over 100 recipes for everything from breakfast/brunch fare to a decadent dessert. The photographs are enticing, so don't read on an empty stomach!

The only thng that keeps me from giving the book five stars is the fact that there didn't seem to be anything new and inventive that I haven't seen in a multitude of other books. Maybe part of the allure of the book is the association with The Violet Bakery. Since I have never been there to visit, I may be missing that connection.

If you enjoy cookbooks, this is a beautiful choice.

I was given a digital copy of this edition by NetGallery in exchange for my fair and honest review.

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### **Lynne says**

I love this book! This cookbook, based on a bakery in London, has an abundance of delicious recipes! Many are sweet but there is a nice amount of savory recipes too. I tried the sweet potato, coconut, date and rye muffins, sweet Ron and roasted tomato quiche, and the olive oil sweet wine cake. All were fabulous! I'm looking forward to making apricot kernel upside down cake and the mozzarella rosemary and new potato tarts. There is a great section on pantry items. Overall, this is an excellent bakery cookbook!

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### **Connie Hess says**

I love good cookbooks. Claire Ptak shares her background and experiences along with wonderful recipes and beautiful photography.

There are helpful hints to make your efforts more successful.

I found myself running into my kitchen to see if I had a needed ingredient to make a particular muffin immediately!

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## **Carla says**

3.5\*

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## **Jessie says**

I've made several recipes so far and they've all been delicious!

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## **Kelly Martin says**

This sounded like a good cookbook. It turned out to be more of the same.

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## **Lara says**

Violet Bakery Cookbook includes recipes from a London bakery of which I was unaware until the opportunity to review the book. The book begins with the story of how the bakery came to be, and some advice on the ingredients. Then follows the recipes, organized by meal from breakfast through dessert, including a section of pantry recipes that are used as ingredients in other recipes. Most recipes are for sweet items, though there are a number of savory items such as scones, sandwiches, quiches, tarts, etc.

The recipes each begin with a short description, including its popularity at the restaurant. There are many photographs, which are beautiful. There is also a chapter on foraging ingredients from nature, as this book is less about traditional baking than of adaptation and recognizing the breadth of a variety of ingredients and historical techniques. That being said, one thing I wished the book included was a glossary to explain less conventional ingredients. At first I interpreted the ingredient ground almonds as almond paste, then realized it was almond meal or flour. Very different.

I made two recipes from the book: Chocolate Oat Agave Cookies, and Coconut Macaroons. I found myself making a number of substitutions for the oat cookies, using several different gluten-free flours. However, the cookies still turned out very tender and tasty. Often gluten-free items are crumbly, these are soft and feel easy to break, but aren't crumbly. They are a bit dense, but are also satisfying and not overly sweet. The macaroons are delicious. The touch of honey adds a depth to the sweetness that isn't usually there.

Overall, I'd recommend this book to anyone looking for recipes from the restaurant, as well as those looking for a bit of variety, who want to experiment with some of the alternative ingredients that are more common today, or who have gluten-free, vegetarian or vegan friends but don't want to buy a book dedicated to those diets.

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## **Jonny says**

Beautifully photographed with ingenious recipes and technique! Although some ingredients are hard to

source (plum petals, quince, loganberry, fig leaves), the recipes are promising. Ptak's recipes are balanced and not cloyingly sweet, too. I'm also impressed with the book is organized: by time of day. Recommended!

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## **A says**

I loved this book! I'm not sure what it is with cookbooks changing the way things used to be divided out, but yet again this is not broken down like your old fashioned cook book. Instead it is broken down according to when an item might be served. Morning, afternoon, evening, party, etc. I wasn't sure this would work for me, but the more I read the more it reminded me of my own personal cookbook made up of recipes I received from friends or relatives. I really identified with it, for me it read like a friend's cookbook from my home in the south. I could really see myself and a friend sitting down and pouring over their recipes that we are sharing back and forth. It invoked a strong feeling of nostalgia for me.

As for the actual recipes, they are all inventive and not the typical recipes that you will find in other cookbooks. I have so many recipes marked to try that I have a hard time deciding which one when I have the time. They all make whatever I am making just that bit more special and elegant. Although, I haven't yet found the time to find the fresh ingredients and grind them myself as this book suggest. Maybe one of these days when I happen to have more time I will give it a go and try two batches of the same recipe, one with pre-ground spices and one made with fresh ground spices and see if I can tell a difference.

I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you.

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