

What's For Dessert PDF (Limited Copy)

Claire Saffitz



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What's For Dessert Summary

Sweet Solutions for Every Dessert Craving.

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

In **What's for Dessert**, Claire Saffitz continues the enchanting culinary journey she began in **Dessert Person**, focusing on the beloved theme of sweet treats. This New York Times bestseller presents a treasure trove of over 100 approachable dessert recipes, designed to delight bakers of all skill levels.

The book is organized in a way that highlights both the comforting familiarity of classic desserts and the excitement of innovative flavors. Saffitz expertly covers a wide spectrum of sweets, including luxurious molten lava cakes that ooze chocolate goodness, soothing rice pudding that evokes nostalgia, and decadent chestnut brownies with a rich, nutty flavor. Each recipe is crafted with simplicity in mind, ensuring that even those with minimal baking experience can feel confident in the kitchen. Importantly, the recipes require little equipment—eliminating the need for complex tools like stand mixers, which often intimidate newcomers.

Claire's warmth shines through in her writing, making the baking process feel less daunting and more enjoyable. She includes practical troubleshooting tips throughout, addressing common issues that may arise and offering solutions to foster confidence in her readers. This thoughtful guidance is especially beneficial for novice bakers who may find themselves overwhelmed by the intricacies of dessert preparation.

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The book covers a diverse array of desserts, from refreshing icebox cakes that are perfect for summer gatherings to classic pies that evoke cozy family memories. There are also custards and cookies that cater to various tastes and occasions. Each recipe is not just a list of ingredients and steps; it tells a story and invites bakers into the world of dessert-making, making each sweet creation feel personal and special.

In summary, **What's for Dessert** is a heartfelt celebration of desserts, blending accessible recipes with Saffitz's culinary expertise and love for baking, ensuring that everyone can answer the perennial question: "What's for dessert?"

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About the author

Claire Saffitz is a prominent figure in the culinary world, known for her innovative and approachable style in baking and desserts. With a background that includes a degree from Harvard University and formal training at Le Cordon Bleu, she has carved out a niche that combines technical skill with a relatable charm. Saffitz first garnered public attention as the senior food editor at Bon Appétit, where her engaging videos and accessible recipes resonated with home cooks, encouraging them to embrace their culinary adventures.

In her bestselling cookbook, "What's for Dessert," Saffitz further explores her passion for creating intricate yet achievable desserts. The book not only showcases her culinary expertise but also features her warm storytelling style, making the process of baking feel inviting rather than intimidating. By breaking down complex techniques into simpler steps, she empowers a new generation of bakers to embark on their sweet creations with confidence.

Through her work, Saffitz embodies a philosophy of culinary exploration, emphasizing that baking can be both an art and a joyful experience. Her dedication to demystifying the intricacies of dessert-making continues to inspire many, enabling them to find pleasure in the kitchen and the satisfaction of crafting beautiful, delicious treats.

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Chapter 1 Summary: About the Recipes

In Claire Saffitz's culinary guide, the recipe sections are thoughtfully structured to empower both novice and experienced bakers. The overarching philosophy centers on accessibility and flexibility, ensuring that each recipe invites creativity without sacrificing quality. Below is a synthesis of key principles and the anatomy of her recipes, designed to provide clarity and enhance the cooking experience.

Recipe Principles

Saffitz establishes several foundational principles that serve as the backbone of her recipes:

- 1. Maximize Ingredients:** She advocates for using ingredients in versatile ways – for instance, lemon can be employed for both its juice and zest, adding depth to flavors.
- 2. Store-Bought Ingredients:** Recognizing the importance of convenience, Saffitz encourages the use of high-quality store-bought components, such as jams and ice creams, to elevate homemade dishes while saving time.
- 3. Fresh or Frozen Fruit:** Whether working with fresh or frozen fruit, her recipes are designed to accommodate both, making them accessible regardless of seasonal availability.

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4. **Streamlined Operations:** Recipes are organized into clear, manageable steps. This not only facilitates easier preparation but also ensures bakers can transition smoothly from one task to another.
5. **Minimize Electric Equipment:** Saffitz emphasizes using electric tools only when truly necessary, thus promoting the potential of manual methods, which can offer a more hands-on baking experience.
6. **Central Techniques:** Each recipe highlights essential techniques that are crucial to achieving the desired outcome, ensuring that bakers focus on the skills that matter most.
7. **Value of Steps:** The significance of every step is stressed, particularly those that influence texture and taste, underscoring the integral role of process in baking.
8. **Doneness over Timing:** Rather than adhering strictly to predetermined cooking times, Saffitz encourages bakers to rely on signs of doneness. This adaptable approach takes into account variations in kitchen environments.

Recipe Anatomy

Before diving into the cooking process, Saffitz provides essential information designed to set up readers for success:

- **Servings:** Recommendations for scaling recipes based on cookware size are included, ensuring bakers can adjust to their needs.

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- **Difficulty Rating:** Recipes are classified on a scale of 1 to 3, helping bakers assess the complexity of each dish and match it with their skill level.
- **Common Questions:** A dedicated "Can I..." section answers frequently asked questions about recipe modifications and substitutions, guiding users through troubleshooting.
- **Dietary Considerations:** Each recipe comes with labels for potential dietary restrictions, along with suggested optional pairings to enhance variety.
- **Active and Total Times:** Saffitz provides realistic estimates for both preparation and cooking times, giving readers a clear timeline without the stress of precise timing.
- **Equipment Needs:** A curated list of specialized tools required for success accompanies each recipe, ensuring bakers are well-prepared.
- **Direction Headers:** Bolded section headers clarify the sequence of operations, supporting a logical flow through the recipe.
- **Potential Pitfalls or Optional Upgrades:** Important notes draw attention to critical steps and suggest optional enhancements, empowering bakers to personalize their creations.

Through these principles and structured insights, Saffitz invites readers into a world of baking that values both precision and creativity, making the culinary process engaging and rewarding.

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Chapter 2 Summary: How to Bake with Less Anxiety...and Less Waste

How to Bake with Less Anxiety

Baking can often invoke feelings of intimidation, stemming from complicated ingredient lists, unfamiliar techniques, and intricate processes. Even seasoned bakers may find themselves anxious in the kitchen. To overcome these hurdles, it's crucial to simplify baking by breaking recipes into smaller, manageable parts. Here are key strategies to alleviate anxiety and boost your confidence:

- 1. Visualize the Process:** Begin by reviewing the recipe step-by-step while visualizing the completion. This mental exercise can help you feel more prepared and reduce feelings of being overwhelmed.
- 2. Take Baby Steps Before You Begin** Set the stage for success by preparing your workspace. Gather all necessary ingredients and tools, and clear your workspace. Completing these preliminary tasks fosters a sense of control and eases you into the recipe.
- 3. Read and Make Notes on the Recipe:** Engage rigorously with the recipe. Mark pivotal steps, highlight key indicators, and jot down personal

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notes for future reference. This interaction with the recipe fosters familiarity and reduces stress when baking.

4. Believe in Yourself Cultivate confidence in your organizational skills and attention to detail. Remember that baking is a learnable skill and not as daunting as it may seem; your mindset can significantly impact your experience.

5. Reframe Your Expectations Shift your focus from seeking perfection to valuing the learning journey. Embrace the idea that practice leads to improvement, and that even less-than-perfect results can lead to delightful surprises.

In addition to managing baking anxiety, minimizing waste is another essential aspect of responsible baking. Professional recipe testers emphasize the importance of reducing waste in the kitchen with these practical strategies:

1. Use Reusable Products: Opt for sustainable alternatives to single-use items. Replace materials like aluminum foil and plastic wrap with silicone baking mats, bowl covers, resealable silicone bags, and proofing bags to promote eco-friendliness.

2. Tips for Reducing Waste:

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- **Compost:** If it's feasible in your area, compost food scraps to enrich the soil instead of wasting them.
- **Never Throw Anything Away.** Be inventive—store leftover ingredients and find creative ways to incorporate them into future recipes.
- **Get Creative:** Use lids or plates to cover food items, avoiding reliance on plastic wrap.

By implementing these strategies, bakers can not only reduce anxiety in the kitchen but also minimize waste, ultimately transforming baking into a more enjoyable and sustainable experience.

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Chapter 3 Summary: Equipment

Equipment Overview for Baking Success

In the world of baking, the right equipment can make all the difference. This chapter dives into the essential tools and bakeware that every baker should consider to enhance their baking experience.

Stand Mixers vs. Hand Mixers

When it comes to mixers, both stand and hand variants have their own advantages and disadvantages. **Hand mixers** are budget-friendly and versatile, easily handling a range of recipes. They are ideal for smaller tasks, making them accessible for everyday baking. On the other hand, **stand mixers** boast greater power and efficiency, capable of mixing large batches and tougher ingredients. However, they require more frequent cleaning and attention to ensure all components, like the bowl and attachment, are scraped clean for thorough mixing. It's important to note that when adapting recipes made for hand mixers for use with stand mixers, specific modifications must be made to account for differing mixing forces and techniques.

Baking Without a Mixer

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For those moments when a mixer isn't available, many recipes can still be executed by hand. While tasks such as whipping meringue or deeply creaming butter might be labor-intensive, simpler jobs, like whipping cream or beating egg whites, can still be accomplished with a bit of muscle. This adaptability can be a game-changer for budding bakers.

The Importance of Bakeware

The bakeware used can profoundly influence the outcome of baked goods. It is advisable to favor **heavy-duty, light-colored metal baking pans** to promote even baking. Materials such as nonstick and glass can sometimes lead to inconsistent results; thus, caution is warranted when using them, particularly for delicate items like cakes and custards.

Kitchen Organization: Levels of Equipment

To ensure baking success, it is essential to organize kitchen tools into three distinct levels based on necessity and sophistication:

Level 1 Kitchen: This foundational tier includes basic bakeware and cookware critical for most recipes. Key items feature a metal loaf pan, various baking pans, a pie plate, tart pan, cake pan, heavy-bottomed stainless steel cookware, and essential tools like spatulas, measuring cups, scales, and

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mixing bowls.

Level 2 Kitchen: Building on the basics, this level includes additional tools that enhance baking efficiency. It incorporates specialized bakeware such as springform and Bundt pans, along with practical tools like muffin pans, nonstick skillet, apple corers, blenders, cake testers, and hand mixers.

Level 3 Kitchen: This advanced tier features optional tools that cater to dedicated bakers. Items such as digital instant-read thermometers, food processors, kitchen torches, and stand mixers provide specialized support for various baking tasks, offering an upgraded experience in the kitchen.

By understanding these essential tools and their roles, bakers can greatly improve their baking outcomes and create a more streamlined cooking process. Ultimately, selective investment in quality equipment and bakeware lays a solid foundation for successful baking adventures.

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Chapter 4: Ingredients

Ingredients for Desserts

Creating delightful desserts requires a well-stocked pantry that facilitates quick and efficient preparation. This chapter emphasizes essential ingredients that every baker should consider for a successful baking experience.

Pantry Essentials

To streamline dessert-making, gather a wide variety of staple ingredients. This avoids last-minute store trips and ensures you have what you need on hand.

Chemical Leaveners

Two primary leaveners, baking powder and baking soda, are key to achieving the right texture in baked goods. Store these in airtight containers and aim to replace them after one year for optimal effectiveness. Aluminum-free baking powder is preferred for its cleaner flavor.

Chocolate

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For melt-in-your-mouth desserts, opt for bulk or bar chocolate stored at room temperature. While chocolate sometimes develops a white film, known as "bloom," this does not affect its taste.

Cocoa Powder

Chocolate's deep flavor can be derived from cocoa powder, which is available in two forms: raw and Dutch-processed. Both are interchangeable in recipes based on your flavor preference.

Semisweet Chocolate

When choosing semisweet chocolate, look for bars containing 64%–70% cacao. This range provides a balanced sweetness that enhances rather than overpowers other flavors in your desserts.

Coconut Products

Stocking stabilizer-free coconut milk, along with dried shredded coconut and flakes, is essential, as these versatile ingredients can elevate numerous dessert recipes.

Thickeners

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For pies and puddings, cornstarch is the go-to thickener, providing a smooth and stable consistency that sets well.

Dairy Products

Choose high-quality organic or local dairy products to enrich your desserts. Key items include unsalted butter, cultured dairy, heavy cream, and whole milk. Each contributes to a well-rounded flavor profile.

Eggs

Select large, organic eggs for baking. Each egg typically weighs about 50 grams, offering a reliable measure for recipes.

Extracts and Alcohols

Flavor extracts, including pure vanilla, almond, and peppermint, as well as dark rum, can enhance your dessert's complexity and aroma.

Flour

Flour should be stored in airtight containers to maintain its quality.

Weighing flour is recommended for accuracy, and avoid compacting it when

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measuring by volume.

Types of Flour

Efficient baking calls for unbleached and unbromated all-purpose flour, favoring high-extraction whole wheat flour for its natural nutrients.

Jam

Stocking a variety of jams, particularly apricot and raspberry, provides a flavor boost in many recipes, adding depth and sweetness.

Liquid Sweeteners

Use squeeze bottles for easy dispensing of liquid sweeteners like maple syrup, honey, and agave syrup while baking.

Storage Tips

To preserve freshness, transfer opened ingredients into labeled, airtight containers. This practice helps maintain quality and prevents spoilage.

Nuts and Seeds

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A diverse selection of nuts and seeds can enhance desserts. Store these in the freezer to protect against rancidity, keeping them fresher for longer.

Rolled Oats

Old-fashioned oats are an essential ingredient and should be stored in airtight containers at room temperature for optimal freshness.

Salt

Kosher salt is essential for enhancing flavors, and flaky sea salt can be used as a finishing touch. Understanding the role of salt in baking ensures a well-balanced taste.

Spices

A well-organized collection of whole and ground spices adds depth to desserts, with a reminder to replace any that are over a year old for the best flavor.

Sugars

Granulated sugar is widely used in baking, while brown sugars should be stored in airtight containers to prevent hardening.

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Unflavored Gelatin Powder

Having unflavored gelatin powder on hand is crucial for various baking uses, providing structure and stability to many desserts.

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Chapter 5 Summary: Chilled & Frozen Desserts

In this chapter, we explore an enticing selection of chilled and frozen desserts, beautifully crafted to simplify preparation and enhance enjoyment during special occasions. Emphasizing the use of flavors that evoke nostalgia and celebration, the recipes range from simple delights to more sophisticated creations, ensuring there is something for everyone to savor.

Overview of Chilled and Frozen Desserts

The chapter begins with an introduction to the world of chilled and frozen treats that require advance preparation. This foresight is key to eliminating last-minute chaos, as many desserts harness the magic of layering and rely on ingredients such as gelatin, eggs, and cream to achieve the desired texture. Coffee and fruit are prominent flavors throughout, reminiscent of festive times and personal memories.

Featured Recipes

1. Roasted Red Plum & Biscoff Icebox Cake

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Very Easy

A delightful no-bake cake featuring layers of roasted plum filling and Biscoff cookies. With a total time of 2 hours 45 minutes (plus 12 hours

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chilling), it promises a light, fruity experience that's simple yet impressive.

2. French 75 Jelly with Grapefruit

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Very Easy (Gluten-Free)

Inspired by the classic French 75 cocktail, this refreshing jelly combines gin, sparkling wine, and grapefruit segments. It can be prepared easily in advance, making it an ideal dessert for special occasions.

3. Pineapple & Coconut-Rum Sundaes

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Very Easy (Gluten-Free, Vegan)

These sundaes capture the essence of piña coladas with a tropical coconut and pineapple sorbet, roasted pineapple, and a crunchy topping of coconut flakes.

4. Melon Parfaits

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Very Easy (Gluten-Free)

Featuring layers of a melon granita and cottage cheese, these parfaits provide a refreshing and textured treat, particularly suited for hot weather.

5. Persimmon Panna Cotta

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Serves 8 | Difficulty: Very Easy (Gluten-Free)

This delicate dessert, made from creamy ripe Hachiya persimmons and buttermilk, is topped with slices of Fuyu persimmons for a subtle, smooth flavor.

6. Goat Milk Panna Cotta with Guava Sauce

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Very Easy (Gluten-Free)

A unique panna cotta utilizing evaporated goat milk, paired with a sweet guava sauce, exemplifies an effortless yet sophisticated dessert.

7. Classic Sundae Bombe

Serves 10 | Difficulty: Very Easy

Resembling a classic sundae, this molded dessert layers chocolate and vanilla ice cream with cherries and almonds. It is a universally appealing treat perfect for gatherings.

8. Salty Brownie Ice Cream Sandwiches

Makes 8 | Difficulty: Easy

Combining chewy brownie layers with ice cream, these nostalgic sandwiches offer a fun and easy-to-eat dessert.

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9. **No-Bake Lime-Coconut Custards with Coconut Crumble**

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Easy

Evocative of Key lime pie, these custards feature a creamy coconut base topped with a crunchy crumble, perfect for coconut lovers.

10. **Tiramisu-y Icebox Cake**

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Easy

This no-bake twist on classic tiramisu layers coffee-soaked ladyfingers with a luxurious mascarpone mixture, culminating in a delightful dessert.

11. **No-Bake Strawberry Ricotta Cheesecake**

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Easy

Featuring a light blend of ricotta and cream cheese, this cheesecake is topped with strawberries and is a treat that balances indulgence with freshness.

12. **Grape Semifreddo**

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Easy

Using Concord grapes, this creamy semifreddo presents a unique and refreshing dessert option perfect for warm days.

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13. Marbled Mint Chocolate Mousse

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Moderate

This visually stunning dessert features swirling layers of dark and white chocolate mousse infused with peppermint, appealing to both the eyes and palate.

14. Coffee Stracciatella Semifreddo

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Moderate

Enriched by the depth of coffee and chocolate, this creamy semifreddo is enjoyed without the hassle of churning.

15. Mango-Yogurt Mousse

Serves 8 | Difficulty: Moderate

Capturing the essence of a mango lassi, this light mousse offers a refreshing finish to any meal.

Additionally, the chapter ends with an informative note on **curd**, an essential element of desserts that lends a silky texture and sweet-tart flavor, primarily derived from citrus and thickened with eggs.

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Through a delightful array of recipes, this chapter provides a treasure trove of inspiration for creating impressive desserts that cater to diverse audiences while minimizing stress in the kitchen. Each dish weaves a narrative of warmth and joy, encouraging the sharing of sweet moments with loved ones.

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Chapter 6 Summary: Stovetop Desserts: Puddings, Crepes, Fried & Flambéed Things & More

Stovetop Desserts: Puddings, Crepes, Fried & Flambéed Delights

This chapter delves into the delightful realm of stovetop desserts, celebrating their ease and speed in comparison to traditional baked goods. Stovetop desserts not only facilitate direct engagement with the cooking process but also create moments of culinary excitement, such as the delicate flambéing of crepes or the sizzling of fried dough. The recipes range from quick treats to puddings that benefit from a bit of chill time.

Hot Chocolate with Marshmallows

The chapter opens with a classic, rich hot chocolate made from unsweetened chocolate and sweetened condensed milk. This extremely easy recipe, which takes just 10 minutes, is perfect for cozy gatherings and can be enhanced with custom flavorings. Accompany it with homemade marshmallows that soften beautifully in the warm drink.

Coconut–Jasmine Rice Pudding with Lychee

Next, a vegan rice pudding brings together the aromatic essence of jasmine tea and creamy coconut milk, resulting in a dessert that is not only smooth but also infused with the sweetness of lychee. Although it requires some

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chilling time, it is easily prepared in about an hour.

Tapioca Pudding with Saffron & Pomegranate

Inspired by bubble tea, this chewy tapioca pudding incorporates exotic saffron and cardamom flavors, topped with vibrant pomegranate arils that provide a refreshing contrast. The recipe is approachable for home cooks and only involves a moderate effort.

Creamy Rice Pudding with Candied Kumquats

A fundamental comfort dessert, this creamy rice pudding pairs with tangy candied kumquats, creating an exceptional balance between sweetness and acidity. It is effortless to prepare and can be made ahead of time.

Toasted Farro Pudding with Red Wine Cherries

In a unique twist, farro replaces traditional rice in this pudding, delivering a nutty flavor and chewy texture. It is beautifully complemented by cherries that are simmered in red wine, making for an indulgent dessert worth the time.

Banoffee Pudding

A playful take on the British classic, this banoffee pudding incorporates layers of banana and dulce de leche into a custard-like base, culminating in a dessert that is rich and satisfying.

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Burnt Maple Pain Perdu

This version of pain perdu elevates brioche slices by caramelizing them in a mixture of maple syrup and butter, adding a delightful depth of flavor to the classic French toast dish.

Chocolate Coupes

Elegant and rich, these chocolate puddings are served in coupe glasses, layered with whipped cream and chocolate wafer cookies, adding a touch of sophistication to a simple dessert.

Old-Fashioned Cherries Jubilee

For a theatrical finish, this classic dessert features a flambé of cherries ignited with bourbon, served decadently over vanilla ice cream. This charming presentation is sure to impress dinner guests.

Flambéing and Deep-Frying at Home

The narrative takes a practical turn, offering essential safety tips for flambéing and deep-frying, ensuring cooks are well-prepared for these rapid techniques that add spectacular flair to desserts.

Bananas Flambé

Quick and luxurious, bananas are cooked in a rum sauce and served over whipped mascarpone, delivering a sweet yet sophisticated finish to any meal.

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Floating Islands

This airy dessert features poached meringues floating on a delicate pool of crème anglaise, garnished with caramel and toasted almonds for texture and flavor contrast.

Sweet Cheese Blintzes with Lemony Apricot Compote

An exploration of crepes, these blintzes are filled with a sweet cheese mixture and paired with a bright lemony apricot compote, making for a delightful and satisfying dish.

Malted & Salted Caramel Pudding

In a blend of malty flavor and rich caramel, this pudding is finished with whipped cream, resulting in a luxurious dessert that is both comforting and indulgent.

Frosted Sour Cream Cake Donuts

Homemade and deep-fried, these cake donuts deliver a fluffy texture and are often adorned with a sweet frosting, making them a delightful treat for any occasion.

Buckwheat & Lemon Crepes Suzette

This modern interpretation of crepes Suzette incorporates buckwheat flour and features a tantalizing lemon sauce, flambéed for dramatic effect and

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serving as a nod to the dish's classic roots.

Pillowey Beignets

The chapter concludes with soft, airy beignets that are deep-fried and liberally dusted with powdered sugar. These light treats are best enjoyed fresh and make a lovely pairing with coffee.

Summary

Through a blend of easy recipes and dramatic techniques, this chapter presents an enticing look at stovetop desserts, showcasing their versatility and potential for delight across various occasions. Whether you're craving a quick chocolate fix or a luxurious banoffee pudding, this chapter provides the perfect guide to satisfy your sweet tooth.

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Chapter 7 Summary: Easy Cakes

Chapter 7: Easy Cakes Summary

In Chapter 7, author Claire Saffitz embraces her transformation into a "lazy baker," promoting a baking philosophy centered on simplicity and accessibility. This chapter presents a collection of easy cake recipes that often require minimal equipment—just a hand mixer or even manual mixing—instead of complex tools, making them perfect for any home baker. These cakes are not only easy to prepare but also versatile, suitable for breakfast or dessert, and ideal for celebrations.

The chapter opens with the **Fennel & Olive Oil Cake**, a unique loaf cake that harmonizes the delicate flavors of fennel with olive oil and the brightness of lemon zest, complemented by juicy blackberries. Following this, the **Rhubarb & Oat Crumb Cakes** offer a nod to rhubarb bars, featuring individual cakes topped with a sweet crumb, making them delightful as a snack or dessert.

Next, the **Honey-Roasted Apple Cake** steals the spotlight, an oil-based cake that features tender roasted apples for a moist texture, making it perfect for special occasions. Similarly, the **Blueberry Buckle with Cornflake Streusel** presents a delectable combination of crunchy cornflakes and

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fresh blueberries, suitable for both breakfast and dessert.

The **Crunchy Almond Cake** highlights the flavor of almonds and a touch of amaretto, adorned with sliced almonds, and pairs beautifully with fresh fruit. For those seeking a seasonal delight, the **Peach, Bourbon & Pecan Cake** features a frangipane-like batter enriched with peaches and pecans, infused with bourbon for depth of flavor.

Saffitz then shares insights on **Fruit Management**, detailing methods such as poaching, roasting, and macerating, which enhance the flavors and textures when incorporating fruits into the batter.

Following this, the **Morning Glorious Loaf Cake** embodies the beloved qualities of a Morning Glory muffin, enhanced with cream cheese frosting. The **Cranberry Anadama Cake** introduces a tasty blend of cranberries and anadama bread flavors, creating a unique dessert experience.

For chocolate lovers, the **Molten Chocolate Olive Oil Cakes** provide a rich and indulgent treat, with olive oil yielding a flexible batter that promises a decadent molten center. The **Sticky Pumpkin-Chestnut Gingerbread** combines the warm spices of gingerbread with the comforting qualities of pumpkin, perfect for cozy gatherings.

Finally, the chapter explores more complex recipes like the **Whipped Cream**

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Tres Leches Cake, a lighter twist on the traditional three-milk cake made fluffier with whipped cream, and the **Marbled Sheet Cake**, which uses mayonnaise in the batter for added moistness and a nostalgic frosting update.

In conclusion, Claire Saffitz's Easy Cakes chapter celebrates approachable baking while encouraging experimentation with unique flavors and techniques. Each recipe is designed to make baking less intimidating and more creative, promising satisfying results for any occasion.

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Chapter 8: Bars, Cookies & Candied Things

The chapter "Bars, Cookies, & Candied Things" invites readers into the world of delightful dessert-making, showcasing recipes for cookies, bars, and candied treats that are both easy to prepare and enjoyable to savor. By emphasizing diverse shapes, textures, and flavors, the chapter caters to both novice and experienced bakers, focusing on simple methods that eliminate the need for electric mixers. Techniques such as slice-and-bake and drop-and-bake are highlighted to streamline the baking process, allowing for quick assembly and generous yields.

Starting with **Raspberry Almond Thumbprints**, these cookies offer a satisfying blend of a crisp exterior and chewy center, enriched by the tartness of raspberry jam and freeze-dried raspberries, bringing the essence of French macarons to a more manageable format. **Phyllo Cardamom Pinwheels** follow, featuring layers of tender, flaky dough brushed with butter and sprinkled with cardamom sugar, reminiscent of delightful palmiers and perfect for a sophisticated treat.

The chapter also introduces the concept of being a 'cookie hero'—the idea that having cookie dough in the freezer allows for the ability to produce fresh-baked cookies at a moment's notice. Meanwhile, the **Seedy Whole Wheat Chocolate Chip Skillet Cookie** merges wholesome ingredients such as whole wheat flour and seeds to create a rich, chewy cookie that can

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be made in less than an hour.

Dessert enthusiasts will appreciate the **Cocoa-Chestnut Brownies**, which combine earthy chestnuts with rich cocoa for a gourmet feel, and the innovative **Honey & Tahini Toffee Matzo** a unique Passover confection that offers a chewy and flavorful alternative to traditional toffee. The chapter continues with the **Salty Cashew Blondies**, where the combination of sweet blondies and crispy, toffee-covered cashews proves irresistible.

For a classic yet unique offering, readers can try **Glazed Spelt Graham Crackers**, which utilize spelt flour for a nutty flavor, complementing the crisp texture suitable for snacking or as a base for s'mores. **Toasted Rice Sablés** follow, featuring a gluten-free recipe that incorporates toasted rice flour and crispy rice cereal, resulting in light, sandy-textured cookies.

For citrus lovers, **Lime Squiggles** offer melt-in-your-mouth indulgence, enhanced with cream cheese and topped with a tangy glaze. Those seeking a more intricate experience can tackle **Prune & Almond Rugelach**, a traditional rolled cookie filled with a creative blend of prune and almond purée.

Finally, a straightforward recipe for **Sugar Cookies** rounds out the chapter, utilizing a slice-and-bake method with various sugars to create a range of textures and flavors without extensive decoration.

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Overall, this chapter not only provides a delightful assortment of easily executable dessert recipes but also fosters a sense of joy in baking, encouraging readers to explore and enjoy the art of making sweet treats.

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Chapter 9 Summary: Pies, Tarts, Cobblers & Crisps

In Chapter 9, titled "Pies, Tarts, Cobblers, & Crisps," the author shares a deep appreciation for the art of baking fruit-based desserts, emphasizing the love and care that goes into crafting a classic fruit pie. This chapter not only highlights traditional pies but also explores a variety of pie-adjacent desserts, including cobblers, crisps, and galettes. The provided recipes cater to a range of skill levels, from beginners to those looking for a more refined centerpiece dessert, ensuring that both novice and experienced bakers find joy in the process.

Key Recipes Overview:

1. Cherry & Brown Butter Buckwheat Crisp:

A quick dessert combining the earthy tones of buckwheat flour with vibrant, juicy cherries, topped with a crunchy layer that adds texture and flavor. This easy recipe requires only 30 minutes of active time.

2. Pastry Bianco with Slow-Roasted Plums:

A minimally complex slab of buttery pastry topped with slow-roasted plums and accompanied by whipped crème fraîche. The blend of flavors

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embraces the essence of seasonal fruits in a straightforward cooking method.

3. Berry Crisp with Seedy Granola Topping:

A gluten-friendly option packed with assorted berries, this berry crisp features a nutritious granola-like topping that complements the juicy fruit base.

4. Easy Apple Galette:

This rustic, free-form tart features sliced apples and a simple mixture of pastry dough and bread crumbs. It embodies straightforward elegance, perfect for those new to baking.

5. Honeyed Nut & Phyllo Pie:

Drawing inspiration from traditional baklava, this pie layers delicate phyllo dough with a rich honeyed nut filling, making it an easy yet impressive dessert choice.

6. Cinnamon & Sugar Apple Pie:

A beloved classic, this recipe enhances the traditional apple pie with cinnamon, delivering a comforting taste within a flaky, buttery crust.

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7. Fried Sour Cherry Pies:

A playful take on the classic sour cherry pie, these mini fried pies present a unique and fun way to enjoy the tart flavor of cherries, perfect for gatherings.

8. Walnut & Oat Slab Pie:

This wholesome pie merges nutrient-rich oats and walnuts, making it an innovative choice that's both satisfying and nourishing.

The chapter encourages bakers to adapt recipes based on personal preferences and dietary needs, showcasing the versatility of these desserts. Each recipe celebrates the joy of baking while maintaining an emphasis on ease and flavor, inviting readers to discover the happiness that comes from creating delicious fruit desserts in their own kitchens.

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Chapter 10 Summary: More Desserts from the Oven: Baked Custards & Puddings, Soufflés & Meringue Desserts

Chapter 10 Summary: More Desserts from the Oven

Introduction

Chapter 10 delves into a delightful array of baked desserts, leaning heavily on the versatility and functionality of eggs, which play a crucial role in achieving texture and flavor. These creations—ranging from custards and puddings to soufflés and meringues—are often gluten-free due to their egg-centric nature. A significant focus is placed on employing water baths as a technique to ensure even baking and prevent overcooking, particularly in more delicate recipes.

Key Categories

The chapter categorizes these enticing baked goods into three main types:

- **Custards & Puddings:** These rich and creamy desserts offer a satisfying density, perfect for indulgent treats.
- **Soufflés:** Known for their light and airy consistency, soufflés require careful baking to achieve their characteristic rise without collapsing, making

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timing and technique paramount.

- **Meringue Desserts:** Utilizing whipped egg whites, these desserts are known for their structure and sweetness, creating a range of textures from crispy to chewy.

Recipe Highlights

1. **Cajeta Pots de Crème:** A sweet, custard-like dessert served in ramekins, flavored with cajeta, a type of caramel-like sauce. Although it has a lengthy total time of five hours, the active preparation time is only 25 minutes, making it a simple yet rewarding choice.

2. **Baked Semolina Pudding with Clementines & Bay Leaves:** This easy dessert incorporates comforting flavors, served in a shallow baking dish. It combines the nuttiness of semolina with the bright zest of clementines.

3. **Spiced Pear Charlotte with Brioche:** A crustless treat that marries the warmth of spiced pears with soft brioche, creating a beautiful presentation for special occasions.

4. **Choose-Your-Own-Ending Custards (Crème Brûlée or Crème Caramel):** These two variations share a common base but offer different experiences with their unique caramel toppings, allowing bakers to customize their desserts.

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5. **Cherry Pavlova with Hibiscus:** A stunning meringue dessert adorned with cherries poached in hibiscus syrup, pairing the crunchy meringue with the floral sweetness of the fruit.

6. **Profiterole Bar:** A classic French delight where guests can fill light choux pastries with ice cream and drench them in a variety of sauces, turning dessert into an interactive experience.

7. **Black Sesame Merveilleux:** A creative spin on meringues, this dessert incorporates the nutty essence of black sesame, offering a unique flavor profile.

8. **Souffléed Lemon Bread Pudding:** This uplifting version of traditional bread pudding features bright lemon curd, transforming the classic into a light and refreshing treat.

Technique Emphasis

The chapter underscores the importance of precision in both timing and technique, especially with egg whites and the water bath method. This careful approach not only enhances texture but also allows for a pleasant balance of rich flavors and airy sensations. Even novice bakers can find success in these seemingly complex recipes with careful attention and

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practice.

Conclusion

With a structured and patient approach, the chapter conveys that creating impressive baked desserts is within reach for all bakers. Each recipe serves as an invitation to dive into the enjoyable world of oven-baked treats, encouraging exploration and creativity in the kitchen.

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Chapter 11 Summary: Essential Recipes & Techniques

Essential Recipes & Techniques

Overview

In this chapter, renowned pastry chef Claire Saffitz highlights the crucial role of detailed instructions in the culinary arts, specifically within the realm of baking. Aimed at both novice bakers and seasoned pastry enthusiasts, the chapter serves as a comprehensive guide filled with essential recipes and techniques that set the foundation for crafting a variety of desserts featured throughout the book.

All-Purpose Flaky Pastry Dough

The chapter begins with the key recipe for All-Purpose Flaky Pastry Dough, designed to yield two portions—ideal for making two single-crust pies or one double-crust pie. The dough is labeled as "Very Easy," with an active preparation time of just 25 minutes, though the total time extends to 2 hours and 25 minutes to allow for proper chilling. A bench scraper is recommended to facilitate easier handling. This dough's forgiving nature produces a tender, flaky crust, achieved through careful handling and chilling of the ingredients. Step-by-step instructions guide readers through

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the process of forming and rolling out the dough, ensuring clarity and ease of use.

Essential Techniques

The chapter also delves into fundamental baking techniques that are indispensable for mastering dessert-making, including:

- **Rolling Out Chilled Pastry Dough:** A method to achieve the perfect thickness and shape for crusts.
- **Whipping Cream to Stiff Peaks:** Essential for creating light and airy textures.
- **Browning Butter:** A technique that enhances the flavor of baked goods through a toasty aroma.
- **Using a Pastry Bag:** Tips for neatly filling pastries and decorating desserts.

Recipe Highlights

To illustrate these techniques in practice, Saffitz presents several recipe highlights:

1. **Classic Sundae Bombe:** A visually stunning, layered ice cream dessert that combines flavors and textures.
2. **Floating Islands:** Delicate poached meringues served in creamy crème anglaise, offering a light, airy experience.

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3. Malted Banana Upside-Down Cake: A delectable combination of banana and malt flavors that creates a nostalgic taste profile.

Visual Guides

Throughout the chapter, visual guides enhance the reader's understanding, providing illustrated steps for tasks such as beating egg whites with sugar, making marshmallows, and filling a pastry bag. These visuals serve as helpful references to reinforce learning and technique execution.

Essential Desserts

The chapter emphasizes "Almost Foolproof Techniques," with consistent instruction on important processes like tempering eggs and cooking caramel. These techniques are designed to ensure success, allowing bakers to tackle recipes with confidence.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this chapter not only serves as a practical resource for mastering desserts but also reflects Claire Saffitz's culinary philosophy: clarity in technique fosters confidence and joy in creation. Each recipe is crafted to inspire a sense of achievement, empowering bakers to celebrate the pleasure of making desserts from scratch.

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Chapter 12: Other Essential Techniques

Chapter 12 Summary: Other Essential Techniques

Introduction

In this chapter, Claire Saffitz invites readers to view dessert-making not just as a culinary task, but as a form of self-care and comfort. With a commitment to accessibility, she presents a varied collection of dessert recipes, ranging from simple chilled options to more intricate baked goods. The focus remains on enjoyment, fulfillment, and accommodating different skill levels and dietary restrictions.

Recipe Matrix

To aid readers in their dessert-making journey, Saffitz introduces a comprehensive matrix that classifies over 100 recipes based on difficulty and time requirements. This tool is designed to empower individuals to select desserts that align with their skills and available time, making the baking experience more approachable.

Baking with Less Anxiety

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Saffitz emphasizes breaking down the dessert-making process into manageable steps. By visualizing the recipe and preparing ingredients in advance, bakers can reduce stress. She encourages readers to savor the baking experience rather than stressing solely about the final product, promoting a more relaxed approach to creating desserts.

Techniques Overview

The chapter details essential dessert-making techniques, which are fundamental for success:

- **Folding mixtures** for incorporating different components.
- **Whipping cream** to achieve the desired texture.
- **Baking in a water bath** to ensure even cooking, particularly for custards.
- **Whipping egg whites** to varying stages, crucial for texture and volume.

These foundational skills provide the groundwork for all dessert creations.

Chilled & Frozen Desserts

Saffitz showcases a variety of refreshing chilled desserts that can be made in

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advance for convenience, including:

- **Roasted Red Plum & Biscoff Icebox Cake:** A layered delight with textures that blend seasonal fruit and spiced cookies.
- **French 75 Jelly with Grapefruit:** A sophisticated treat with a hint of citrus and a nod to the classic cocktail.
- **Persimmon Panna Cotta:** A creamy dessert highlighting the unique flavors of this seasonal fruit.

Stovetop Desserts

For those looking for quick results without an oven, Saffitz shares easy stovetop recipes like:

- **Hot Chocolate with Marshmallows,** a cozy classic.
- **Coconut–Jasmine Rice Pudding with Lychee,** combining rich flavors with a delicate touch.

These recipes allow bakers to experiment and create delicious treats in no time.

Easy Cakes

Emphasizing simplicity, Saffitz offers straightforward recipes such as:

- **Fennel & Olive Oil Cake with Blackberries:** A delightful fusion of

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savory and sweet.

- **Blueberry Buckle with Cornflake Streusel:** A comforting cake perfect for any occasion, featuring a crunchy topping.

These approachable cakes encourage everyone to embrace baking with confidence.

Bars, Cookies & Candied Things

This section is filled with fun, delectable treats, including:

- **Raspberry Almond Thumbprints**, which blend fruit and nut flavors beautifully.

- **Phyllo Cardamom Pinwheels**, showcasing the versatility of phyllo dough in creative desserts.

Saffitz prioritizes fun and flavor in these easy-to-make delights.

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, Chapter 12 offers an array of approachable recipes and essential techniques designed to inspire creativity and enjoyment in dessert-making. Claire Saffitz aims to motivate bakers at all levels to connect with the joy of preparing desserts, while minimizing anxiety and waste within the kitchen. This chapter is a celebration of the pleasure found

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in crafting sweet treats.

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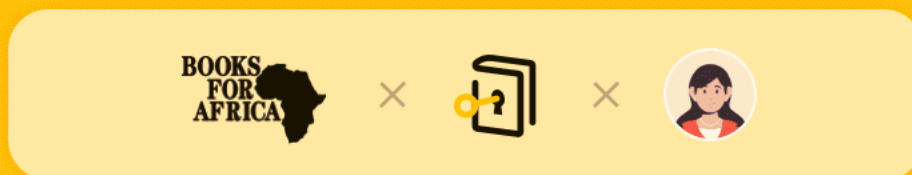




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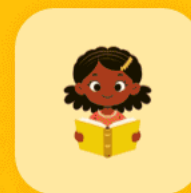
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