

LE PETIT PARIS WORKSHOP COLLECTION



THE FRENCH ARTISAN BAKING SYSTEM

MASTER THE FOUNDATIONS, TECHNIQUES,
AND SIGNATURE RECIPES OF
FRENCH ARTISAN BAKING



Stéphan' Martin

FRENCH ARTISAN BAKER
& FOUNDER OF LE PETIT PARIS

A Preview of The French Artisan Baking System

This preview introduces The French Artisan Baking System, a book built from more than thirty-five years of experience in French artisan baking and from the workshops I teach at Le Petit Paris in Florida.

The project is already well advanced: the structure of the book, the recipes, the technical foundations, and the educational system are defined. Writing and layout are in progress, and this preview gives you two complete chapters: the Fraisier and the Baguette.

This book does more than explain what to do: it helps you observe, understand, and adjust so you can better master your recipes and know what to correct when the result is not what you expected.

The complete book will bring together the foundations, techniques, recipes, control points, and troubleshooting methods needed to understand French artisan baking, not simply follow recipes.

The French Artisan Baking System is now live on Kickstarter.

If you enjoy this preview and believe this approach can help you become a better baker, you can support the project and help bring the complete book to life.

Discover and support the project on Kickstarter



Thank you for reading, baking, and helping me pass this knowledge on.

Stéphane Martin

Artisan Baker & Pastry Chef

Le Petit Paris — Florida

IN THE COMPLETE BOOK

Here are the main sections and recipes included in the complete edition of
The French Artisan Baking System.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Preface, The Story Behind This Book, How to Use This Book

PART I: THE FOUNDATIONS

Understanding Dough, Fermentation and Temperature, Sourdough, Bread-Making
Fundamentals, Essential Pastry and Viennoiserie Foundations

PART II: BREAD

The Baguette, Sourdough Bread

PART III: VIENNOISERIE

The Croissant

PART IV: FRENCH PASTRY

The Fraisier, The Éclair, The Macaron, The Napoléon, Black Forest, Fresh Fruit Tart,
Quiche

PART V: UNDERSTAND & IMPROVE

Troubleshooting, Organizing Your Production

REFERENCES

Conversion Guide, Temperature Guide, French Baking Glossary, Technique Index,
Recipe Index



Preface

Recipes are essential. They show us what to do, in what order, and with what ingredients. They are the starting point of every baking journey.

But a recipe alone is not enough.

When the flour changes, the temperature rises, or the final result isn't what you expected, one question inevitably comes to mind:

Why?

That question is the reason this book exists.

The French Artisan Baking System is not simply a collection of recipes. It has been designed as a learning journey, where each new recipe builds upon the knowledge you've already gained. The foundations are explained once, then applied again and again throughout the book, allowing you to progress naturally, one step at a time.

A recipe teaches you what to do.

Understanding the principles teaches you how to create.

As you discover the role of each ingredient, the purpose behind every technique, and the reason each step matters, you'll gradually gain confidence. Instead of simply following recipes, you'll learn how to adapt them, solve problems, and achieve consistent results.

My goal is not to turn you into a professional baker or pastry chef. It is to share the way an artisan thinks: observe, understand, then act. This mindset will help you become more independent and, above all, find greater joy in baking your own breads, viennoiseries, and pastries.

Because the greatest satisfaction doesn't come only from pulling a beautiful loaf or cake out of the oven. It comes from understanding why it succeeded, knowing you can reproduce it, and feeling confident enough to go even further.

I hope this book will stay with you for years to come—not only as a collection of recipes, but as a guide that helps you understand, experiment, improve, and share your passion with others.

Welcome to the French Artisan Baking System.

The French Artisan Baking System

The Story Behind This Book

Before We Begin

It is four o'clock in the morning. The bakery is never completely silent. The sourdough starter continues its slow work, the flour is waiting to be weighed, and the mixers will soon begin to turn. In a few hours, the first customers will walk through the door. They will see golden baguettes, crisp croissants, and carefully finished pastries. They will smell warm butter, coffee, and bread fresh from the oven.

What they will not see are the nights of work, the repeated trials, the training, the travel, and the thousands of decisions behind every product. Nor will they see the questions that still run through my mind whenever I look at a dough: Why did it ferment differently from yesterday? Why is this flour absorbing more water? How can a difference of just a few degrees completely change the result?

After more than thirty-five years in the profession, that need to understand has never left me. I can still spend a long time studying a dough simply because it did not behave as expected. What bothers me most is not the unexpected result itself; it is not yet knowing why it happened.

I have never viewed baking as a succession of recipes to reproduce. A formula provides a framework. True craftsmanship begins when you understand what is happening in the dough and become able to observe, correct, and adapt. That is where craft meets science, and where precision leaves room for creativity.

This book grew out of that obsession with why. I do not simply want to show you how to make a baguette, a croissant, or a French pastry. I want to give you the foundations that allow you to think, improve, and eventually create without depending blindly on a recipe. Understanding the craft also means choosing ingredients more carefully, respecting fermentation, and taking back control of what we eat.

Time is at the heart of this approach. It develops flavor, transforms texture, and shapes artisans as well. It has always been my most important ingredient.

A Calling

My name is Stéphan Martin. My parents tell me that when I was three years old and someone asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would already answer, "I am going to be a baker." I have no memory of saying it, but I do know that I never changed my mind. Baking was not a path I happened to choose as a teenager; it was already there.

I grew up in a family where homemade food was simply part of everyday life. My mother has always been an excellent cook. She never made it her profession, but she prepared meals with care, generosity, and respect for the ingredients. Long before I could explain what made an ingredient good, she had taught me to recognize quality. She also passed on

a simple idea: when you make food yourself, you know what you are serving to the people you care about.

When I was about ten or eleven, I spent hours during school vacations at the bakery in my village. I was not there to buy bread. I was there to watch. I studied the gestures, listened to the mixers, and watched a few simple ingredients become something alive. I knew nothing yet about fermentation, gluten, or temperature, but I already knew that I wanted to be on the working side of that counter.

At fourteen and a half, I began my apprenticeship at La Renommée, where I stayed for five years: two years in pastry, one in bread baking, then two more years of professional training toward the Brevet de Maîtrise in pastry. The hours never discouraged me. Where others saw waking in the middle of the night and the heat of the ovens, I mostly saw the profession I had chosen.

I learned the technical foundations there, but above all I learned a way of working: rigor, consistency, humility in the face of the dough, and respect for work done properly. Very quickly, a second ambition took shape. I did not only want to make things; I wanted to build a business. The idea of creating a shop, welcoming customers, training a team, and developing a company attracted me as much as the bakery itself. From that point on, the artisan and the entrepreneur in me were never separate.

Always Learning

The end of my apprenticeship never meant the end of my education. In every bakery where I worked around Paris, I looked for what I could learn. Some businesses were very different; others appeared almost identical. Yet one gesture, one way of organizing the work, one fermentation method, or one baking technique could reveal an entirely different way of thinking about the craft. Even two products that look the same can be the result of very different technical skills.

I have always loved to travel. A season at Club Med in Greece, just after La Renommée, allowed me to work alongside people from very different backgrounds before my military service. The French Navy then took me to Réunion Island and along the African coast. Those journeys fed my curiosity about cultures, eating habits, and people. They also taught me how much you can understand about someone by watching what they prepare and how they share it.

I also tried to work in London. The experience lasted only one weekend: my English simply was not good enough. That unsuccessful attempt did not turn me away from living abroad. It taught me something much simpler: a skill you neglect eventually becomes a limitation.

Back in France, I joined the bakery owned by Marc and Christine Lucas. That is where I met Véronique in 1999. We had the same relationship with work: long hours, very few compromises on quality, and the desire to build something of our own. Since then, the important decisions have always been made together.

Our skills complement each other. Véronique understands customers, sales, and hospitality; she also knows when an idea can become a real product. I am naturally drawn to production, formulas, calculations, management, and anything that can improve a

process. I might come to her with a highly technical idea, and she would immediately know how to make it appealing and understandable to the customer. In return, many of my experiments began because she pushed me to try something new.

When we told Marc and Christine that we planned to leave and buy a business of our own, they had not been planning to sell. Our decision to leave led them to offer us their bakery. In 2005, we became the owners of the place where we had worked and where we had met. Taking it over was more than a transaction; it meant preserving the trust they had placed in us.

A few years later, we opened a second bakery. That expansion taught us to structure, delegate, and teach much more effectively. In one bakery, you can watch everything yourself. With two locations, you have to build methods strong enough that quality does not depend entirely on your physical presence.

At the same time, I continued my own training. Several times a year, we brought in leading professionals to introduce new techniques and help us renew our collections, especially for Christmas and Easter. I trained with the Pierre Hermé School, Philippe Parc, Meilleur Ouvrier de France and World Champion, and Bellouet Conseil. I was not looking for another certificate. I wanted an idea, a method, or an explanation that could change the way I worked the very next day.

With Anthony, a baker who was as passionate as he was technically skilled, we also entered regional competitions for baguette, croissant, mille-feuille, and Paris-Brest. We were not trying to beat other bakers; we were trying to break out of our routine and see how our work stood up when examined closely. In 2016, Anthony and I each won the regional croissant competition in our respective categories.

In 2017, I received the title of Maître Artisan. The application had to demonstrate not only mastery of the craft, but also commitment to training, quality, and passing knowledge on to others. I saw it less as a crowning achievement than as confirmation of the direction I had followed from the beginning: never assume that you already know enough.

Starting Over

On paper, we had succeeded. We were running two bakeries, our teams were in place, and our work was recognized. Yet administrative constraints were taking up an increasing share of our days. After another tax dispute, we concluded that we had only two real choices left: become employees again or rebuild somewhere else. We chose to start over.

Leaving was neither impulsive nor a rejection of France. We prepared the move for several years. I had always liked the United States. An initial opportunity with a macaron franchise in Sarasota was supposed to make the move easier. It did not work out, but it introduced us to Florida. We liked its energy and entrepreneurial spirit, and eventually decided to look for our own bakery so we could keep the independence that had always guided us.

After several scouting trips, we found the business that would become Le Petit Paris almost at the last moment. We arrived on April 20, 2019. Ten days later, on May 1, we opened. In between, we had to find a home, complete the purchase, handle the paperwork, organize

suppliers, and take over the bakery. Our suitcases were barely unpacked when the first batches were already going into production.

The beginning was encouraging. The previous bakery already had customers, and the local markets - especially Winter Garden - quickly helped people discover our work. We did not try to invent an American version of our craft. We did what we knew how to do: long-fermented breads, all-butter viennoiserie, and artisan pastries made from ingredients we know, without unnecessary shortcuts and with the time required to achieve the flavor and quality we are looking for.

For me, eating well does not mean turning every product into diet food. A croissant is still a food made for pleasure. But it can be made with real butter, carefully fermented dough, and ingredients you can actually name. That distinction matters. An artisan does not promise a miracle food; an artisan gives customers the ability to know what they are eating.

Today, Le Petit Paris has become more than a shop. It is a bakery, a place where we meet and talk with our customers, a teaching space, and a laboratory where we are constantly testing new ideas. This book was born in that environment, between batches, farmers markets, conversations at the counter, and the questions asked during our workshops.

The COVID-19 pandemic arrived less than a year after we opened. We were fortunate to be in Florida and never had to close the bakery. Several markets were suspended, while the Winter Garden market even added a Wednesday session. The period remained uncertain, but we kept going and strengthened our connection with customers who were still looking for food that was simple, familiar, and made well.

I remain deeply attached to traditional gestures, but I am not nostalgic for old tools. When a technology can improve my work or help answer a question, I want to understand it. I use 3D printing to make cutters, stencils, and accessories designed for our own needs. Artificial intelligence has also become a tool for research and creation, never a substitute for the judgment of the artisan.

In 2022, that curiosity led to Sunset Grove, a Christmas log cake whose concept and first recipe were developed with the help of artificial intelligence. To my knowledge, it was among the first pastry creations developed in this way. My goal was not to prove that a machine could replace a pastry chef. I wanted to find out whether a new tool could open a path that human experience could then turn into a real product.

I joined Ambassadeurs du Pain because I found there a vision of baking that I had already defended for years: respect the ingredients, give fermentation the time it needs to transform the dough, pursue better nutritional quality, and pass those principles on. To me, making good bread is not only about achieving a beautiful crust and an even crumb. You should also know what goes into it, be able to explain how it was made, and always look for ways to better nourish the people who eat it.

Not everything worked. Our plan for a second location in Alafaya, east of Orlando, never came to fruition. Le Petit Paris is located in Winter Garden, to the west.. Administrative delays eventually forced us to abandon the project, at significant cost. That experience taught us that an entrepreneur also has to know when to stop pursuing an idea once the conditions no longer allow it to be carried out properly.

Passing It On

I have always enjoyed teaching, first to apprentices and employees, and later to customers. We were already offering workshops in France. I liked opening the bakery to people and showing them what cannot be seen from the shop: how a dough behaves, the decisions made during fermentation, and all the small details that explain why two recipes that look identical on paper can produce completely different results.

In 2024, we launched the workshops at Le Petit Paris. The demand did not suddenly appear that day; it had simply been waiting for someone to offer the opportunity. Beginners, enthusiasts, professionals, and families came to learn, but above all they came with questions. Very quickly, I realized that they did not only want to leave with a recipe. They wanted the method that would allow them to reproduce it, troubleshoot it, and adapt it at home.

Their questions sounded very much like the ones I had asked myself as a child watching the baker in my village: Why? Why is the lamination not developing properly? Why is the sourdough starter behaving this way? Why do we have to wait? Teaching forced me to go beyond the gesture itself. To explain something well, you sometimes have to question what you have been doing for years simply out of habit.

Passing on this knowledge also reflects a personal conviction. We need to recover both the desire and the ability to prepare at least some of what we eat ourselves. This is not about pursuing a perfect diet or removing pleasure from food. It is about knowing what is in our food, limiting unnecessary processing, and giving simple ingredients, time, and craftsmanship a place again. I do not believe we should automatically set craft against industry or reject progress. I believe science and modern tools should help us choose ingredients more carefully, respect the processes, and make food that is more authentic, more flavorful, and more respectful of the people who eat it.

As the workshops approached their second anniversary, I wanted to mark that milestone and reach people who could not come to Winter Garden. A three-hour workshop can teach a great deal, but it is never enough. Participants photographed the stages, filled notebooks, and kept asking questions after the class had ended. What was missing was a resource that connected the foundations, the science, the gestures, and their practical applications.

That is how The French Artisan Baking System was born. I did not want to add another collection of recipes to the many that already exist. I wanted to build the book I wish I had found as an apprentice: a system in which the foundations are explained once, the techniques connect with one another, and every recipe becomes an application of a broader way of thinking.

I do not want readers to close this book remembering my story. I want them to look at a dough differently. To take the time to observe before making a correction. To dare to experiment once they understand the foundations. And to rediscover the pride of making a bread, a viennoiserie, or a pastry themselves, knowing its ingredients, knowing how it was made, and being able to share it with confidence.

If that knowledge is then passed on to a child, a friend, a colleague, or a student, the book will have fully served its purpose. Craft knowledge stays alive only when it is shared.

Time is my most important ingredient. In bread, of course. But also in the life of an artisan.

A Note on Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence played an important role in the creation of this book, and I want to be completely transparent about it.

I am a baker and pastry chef, not a writer. My profession is about working with dough, understanding fermentation, developing recipes, training teams, and passing on techniques. After more than thirty-five years in the craft, I have accumulated a great deal of experience and knowledge, but turning all of that into a clear, structured, and accessible book was an entirely different challenge.

Without artificial intelligence, this book would probably never have existed in this form.

AI helped me transform my knowledge, recipes, methods, and the explanations I have shared for years in my workshops into organized and understandable content. It also assisted me with certain areas of research, the structure of the book, writing and editing, translation, and the development of some educational and visual concepts.

But artificial intelligence does not replace my professional experience, judgment, or hands-on practice. The recipes, methods, technical choices, and recommendations presented in this book are based on my experience as an artisan baker and pastry chef. They are reviewed, corrected, and validated before publication.

Some illustrations and educational diagrams may also be created or developed with the assistance of AI when it provides a clearer way to explain a technique or concept. These visuals are teaching tools: they illustrate what I want to communicate and should not necessarily be considered photographs of an actual production process.

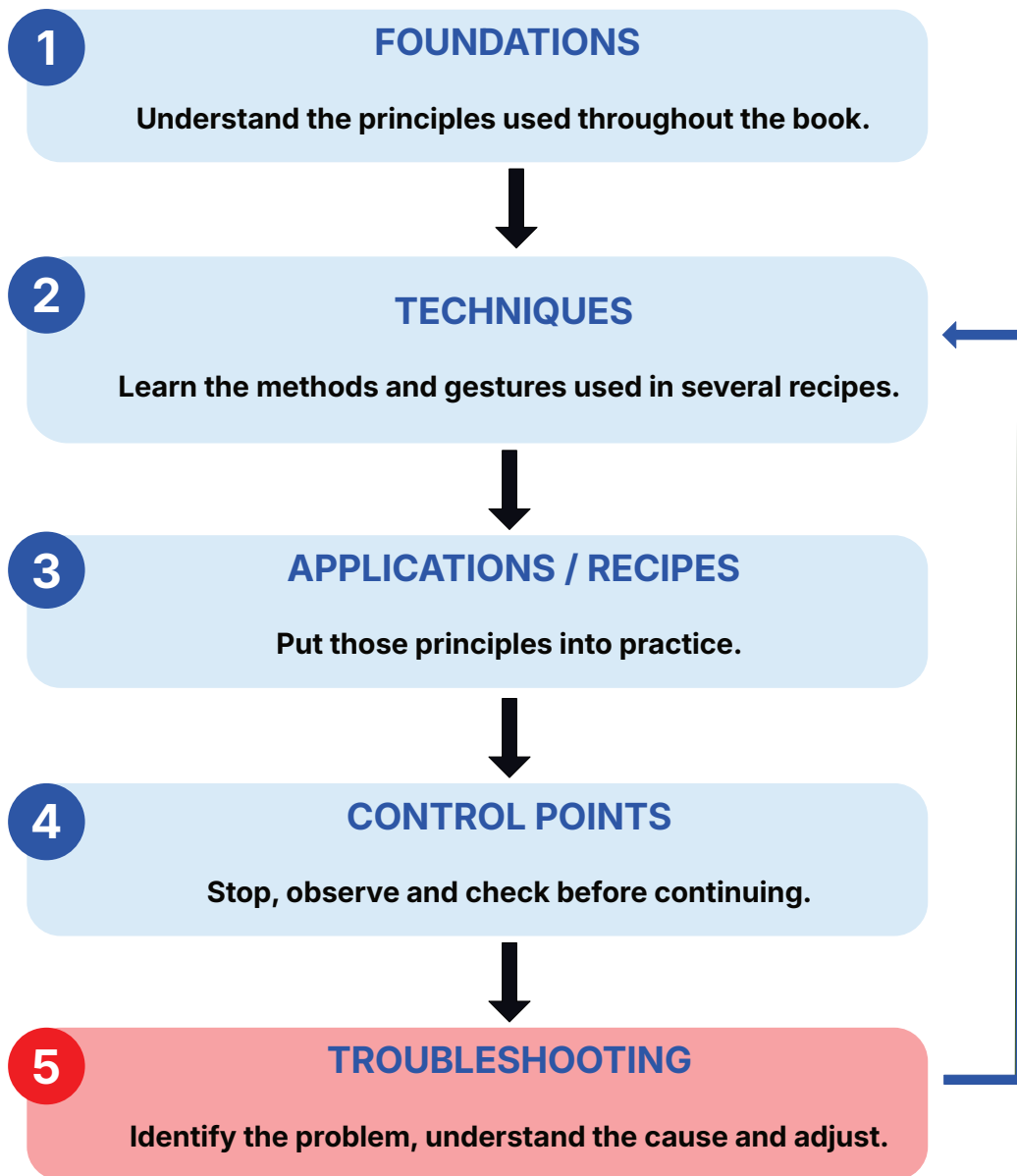
I see artificial intelligence as I see any other modern tool. **The tool does not possess the artisan's experience; it can, however, help the artisan pass that experience on.**

In my case, it allowed me to do something I probably would never have undertaken alone: **put more than thirty-five years of experience into words so that I could share it with others.**

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is designed to help you do more than follow a recipe.

By understanding the principles, observing the result and learning how to adjust, you gradually gain more control and confidence in your baking.



FOLLOW → OBSERVE → UNDERSTAND → ADJUST

HOW TO READ AND USE A RECIPE

Each recipe in this book follows the same logic.

Knowing how to read it will help you get better results and understand what to do when things don't go as planned.

BEFORE YOU START

Every recipe refers to one or more Foundations. Review the referenced Foundations first so you understand the key principles, the reason behind the method and the expected result.

FOLLOW THE METHOD

Read the entire recipe before starting.

Then follow the sequence step by step, but focus on what you see and feel, not only on the time indicated.

USE THE CONTROL POINTS

At key stages, the recipe will tell you what you should observe.

Compare your dough, cream or product with the expected result before continuing.

IF THE RESULT IS NOT RIGHT

Something didn't go as expected?

Go to the Troubleshooting section of the recipe. Start with what you observe, identify the likely cause and apply the recommended correction.

Example:

If the recipe refers to Pastry Cream, see the Foundation Pastry Cream (p. XX).

Control Point Example:

Before shaping, the dough should be:

Smooth • Extensible • Cool enough to handle

If **yes** → continue

If **no** → investigate

Troubleshooting Example:

PROBLEM → POSSIBLE CAUSE → CORRECTION

Poor rise → Under-proofed → Extend proofing

Baking is a cycle of observation and adjustment.

Follow the method.

Observe the result.

Understand what's happening.

Adjust and try again.

THAT IS HOW YOU PROGRESS.

Fraisier



A Classic of French Pastry

A true classic of French pastry, the fraisier holds a special place in pastry displays when the first strawberries of the season arrive. Associated with springtime, family gatherings, and celebrations, it perfectly reflects a French tradition: showcasing seasonal fruit through an elegant, precise, and generous creation.

Beneath its apparent simplicity lies a delicate balance between a light sponge cake, a rich mousseline cream, and fresh strawberries. The strawberries arranged around the ring are not merely decorative: they give the cake its instantly recognizable visual identity.

Success depends less on the complexity of each individual preparation than on the quality of the assembly. The thickness of the layers, the distribution of the cream, the alignment of the strawberries, and the proper chilling time determine its structure, clean slicing, and balance on the palate.

IN THIS CHAPTER

You will learn how to organize each component, control the layer heights, and assemble a neat, stable, and well-balanced fraisier. The cross-section diagram will help you visualize the order of the components and the proportions to maintain.

Level	Size	Key point
Intermediate	Ø 22 cm / 8.5 in 6 to 8 servings	Clean assembly and proper chilling

Understanding the Construction of the Fraisier

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE FRAISIER

A fraisier is an assembled cake. Its success depends less on the difficulty of each individual preparation than on the balance of the layers and the precision of the assembly.

THE STRUCTURE

The sponge cake must remain soft after chilling while still being firm enough to support the cream and fruit. The mousseline cream provides structure, richness, and the connection between the different components.

THE ACETATE STRIP AND OUTER EDGE

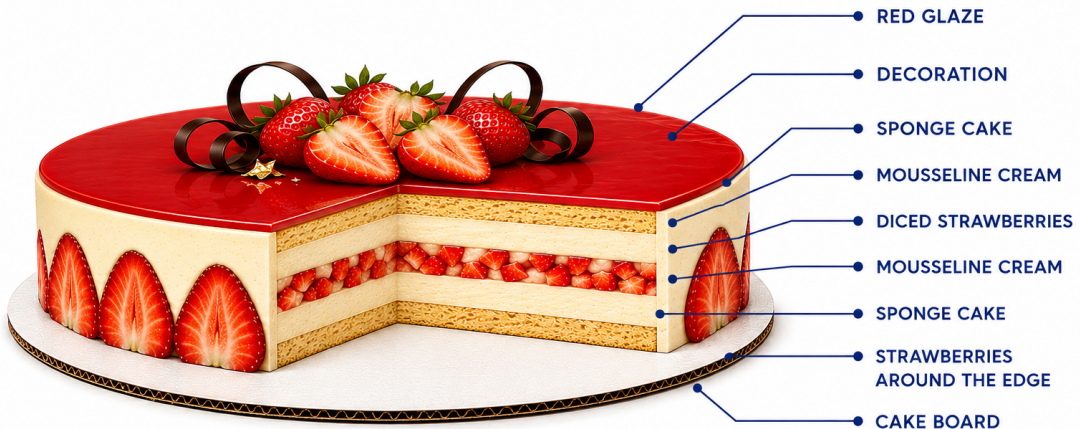
A strip of acetate is placed inside the ring before assembly. It makes unmolding easier and protects the strawberries. The strawberry halves are placed directly on the cake board, cut side against the acetate, then covered with mousseline so that the sponge remains hidden.

THE CENTER

The strawberries are diced and distributed evenly throughout the cream. This arrangement makes slicing easier and helps create balanced portions.

THE FINISH

The red glaze creates a smooth, glossy, and even surface. It protects the top of the cake and provides a clean visual contrast with the mousseline and fresh strawberries.



CONTROL POINT

At the end of assembly, no sponge cake should be visible around the outer edge. The mousseline should fill all the spaces between the strawberries and create a smooth, even border all the way up to the glaze.

Organizing the Work

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The sponge cake must be completely cool before assembly.

The mousseline base and the butter should be at similar temperatures when whipping to obtain a smooth, light, and stable cream.

Prepare the strawberries at the last moment: wash them quickly, dry them carefully, then hull them.

RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATION

THE DAY BEFORE

- *Prepare and bake the sponge cake*
- *Prepare the mousseline base*
- *Cover and chill*
- *Prepare the ring, cake board, and acetate strip*

ON THE DAY OF ASSEMBLY

- Whip the mousseline
- Cut the sponge cakes and strawberries
- Assemble the fraisier
- Allow it to set in the refrigerator

BEFORE SERVING

- Remove the ring while leaving the acetate in place
- Add the decoration
- Keep refrigerated until serving
- Remove the acetate only when slicing

Slice with a clean, slightly warm knife.

Resting Time

Allow the fraisier to set in the refrigerator for at least four hours. An overnight rest gives a cleaner structure and makes slicing easier.

GÉNOISE (FRENCH SPONGE CAKE)

This sponge cake forms the two layers of the fraiser. It should be light, even, and soft enough to remain pleasant after chilling.

INGREDIENTS

Ingredient	Quantity
Whole eggs	200 g / 7.05 oz (<i>about 4 eggs</i>)
Egg yolks	40 g / 1.41 oz (<i>about 2 yolks</i>)
Sugar	120 g / 4.23 oz
Flour	135 g / 4.76 oz

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Approx. 40 × 30 cm / 16 × 12 in baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Mixer
- Rubber spatula
- Sieve
- Offset spatula

UNDERSTANDING AERATION

Aeration traps a multitude of tiny air bubbles inside the eggs. Imagine a swimming pool filled with inflatable balls stacked on top of one another: the whole structure takes up a lot of volume, but remains very fragile.

If you mix too vigorously, press down with the spatula, or crush the mixture, some of these bubbles burst. The mixture then loses volume and the sponge cake becomes flatter and denser.

The same principle applies when spreading the batter: distribute it gently, without pressing or overworking it.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Lift and fold the mixture gently — never crush it.

METHOD

1. Whip the eggs

Place the whole eggs, egg yolks, and sugar in the mixer bowl.

Whip until the mixture becomes pale, very voluminous, and stable enough to form a ribbon.

CONTROL POINT

When you lift the whisk, the mixture should fall back in a ribbon that remains visible on the surface for a few seconds.

2. Fold in the flour

Sift the flour over the mixture.

Fold it in gently with a rubber spatula, moving underneath the mixture and lifting it toward the center. Gradually rotate the bowl to distribute the flour without deflating the air bubbles.

Stop as soon as the mixture is homogeneous. The more you work it, the more volume it will lose.

3. Spread onto the baking sheet

Pour the mixture onto a 40 × 30 cm / 16 × 12 in half-sheet pan lined with parchment paper.

Spread it gently into an even layer. Use as few strokes as possible and do not press the batter down with the spatula.

CONTROL POINT

The surface should be even, but the mixture must retain its volume. A slight irregularity is better than an overworked batter.

4. Bake

Bake for approximately 10 minutes at 180°C / 350°F.

The sponge cake should be lightly golden, remain flexible, and spring back when gently pressed with a finger.

CRÈME MOUSSELINE (MOUSSELINE CREAM)

Mousseline cream gives the fraiser its structure and richness. After whipping, it should be smooth and light, yet firm enough to hold the strawberries and sponge layers in place.

INGREDIENTS

Ingredient	Quantity
Whole milk	500 g / 17.64 oz
Sugar	120 g / 4.23 oz
Egg yolks	80 g / 2.82 oz (about 4 yolks)
Cornstarch	40 g / 1.41 oz
Butter	250 g / 8.82 oz

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Saucepan
- Whisk
- Rubber spatula
- Large mixing bowl or container
- Stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment
- Plastic wrap
- Precision scale

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXTURE

Half of the butter is added while the cream is still hot to enrich the base. The remaining butter is incorporated after cooling, during whipping, which makes the mousseline lighter and more voluminous.

If the base is too cold compared with the butter, the cream may become grainy. If it is too warm, the butter will melt and the mousseline will lose its structure.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Half the butter while hot, the other half after cooling, for a lighter mousseline.

METHOD

1. Heat the milk

Pour the milk into a saucepan and bring it to a boil.

2. Mix the yolks

Mix the egg yolks with the sugar, then add the cornstarch. Whisk until smooth.

3. Cook the mousseline base

Pour a small amount of the hot milk over the yolk mixture while whisking to warm it gradually.

Pour everything back into the saucepan with the remaining milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly.

When the cream reaches a boil, continue cooking for a few moments. This ensures that the starch is fully cooked and helps reduce bacterial risk.

Remove from the heat, add half of the butter, and mix until completely incorporated.

4. Cool the base

Immediately transfer the cream to a large container.

Cover directly with plastic wrap in contact with the surface, then allow it to cool completely.

5. Add the remaining butter and whip

Work the remaining butter until soft.

Whip the cooled base until smooth again. Gradually add the softened butter, then continue whipping until the mousseline is light, smooth, and stable.

CONTROL POINT — The base and the butter should be at similar temperatures. The mousseline should be smooth and free of grains.

6. Use immediately

Use the mousseline as soon as it is ready to assemble the fraisier. It should remain soft enough to pipe between the strawberries, but firm enough to support the different layers.

FRAISIER ASSEMBLY

The fraiser should be assembled with freshly whipped mousseline cream. It should be soft enough to pipe, yet firm enough to hold the strawberries and sponge layers in place.

1. Prepare the ring

Place the 22 cm / 8.5 in ring on the cake board, then line the inside with acetate.

2. Prepare the sponge layers

Cut two discs from the cold génoise. They should be small enough to remain hidden behind the strawberries and mousseline.

3. Arrange the strawberries around the edge

Choose strawberries of similar height and cut them in half lengthwise.

Place them directly on the cake board, cut side against the acetate, fitting them closely together.

CONTROL POINT — The strawberries should reach approximately three-quarters of the total height of the assembled cake.

4. Add the first génoise and mousseline

Place the first génoise disc in the center.

Using a spatula, work the mousseline between the strawberries, then spread an even layer over the génoise.

5. Add the diced strawberries

Distribute the diced strawberries evenly over the mousseline.

6. Add a thin layer of mousseline

Cover the strawberries and génoise with a thin layer of mousseline, filling any gaps to hold everything securely in place.

7. Add the second génoise

Place the second génoise disc on top and press down gently to create an even height.

8. Finish with mousseline

Add the remaining mousseline and smooth it level with the top of the ring.

CONTROL POINT

No génoise should be visible around the edge. The mousseline should reach the top of the ring.

9. Chill and set

Refrigerate the fraiser for at least 4 hours. An overnight rest improves its structure and makes slicing easier.

10. Add the red glaze

Once the fraiser is thoroughly chilled, apply an even layer of red glaze over the surface.

11. Unmold and decorate

Remove the ring, leaving the acetate in place. Decorate the fraiser and keep it refrigerated until serving.

Remove the acetate just before slicing.

FOR CLEAN SLICES

Use a clean, slightly warm knife. Wipe the blade between each slice.



THE BAGUETTE



An Iconic Shape of French Bread

The baguette is one of the most recognizable symbols of French baking. Yet it does not refer to a single recipe, but above all to a shape of bread: an elongated dough, carefully shaped, scored, and then baked to develop a thin, crisp crust.

Behind this apparent simplicity lies a delicate overall balance. Flour, water, salt, yeast, temperature, mixing, fermentation, and shaping all work together. Changing just one of these parameters inevitably affects the others.

In this chapter, two versions are presented: one made with yeast and one with sourdough. They follow the same general production logic, but their fermentation does not behave in exactly the same way. The differences will be explained throughout the process.

The same dough can also be used to make other bread shapes, such as small loaves, *bâtards*, *épis*, or *fougasse*. The recipe creates the dough; the process gives it its shape, texture, and character.

IN THIS CHAPTER

You will learn how to choose the right flour, use autolyse, understand the role of time and temperature, then shape, proof, score, and bake a consistent baguette. The control points will help you adapt the process to the actual condition of the dough.

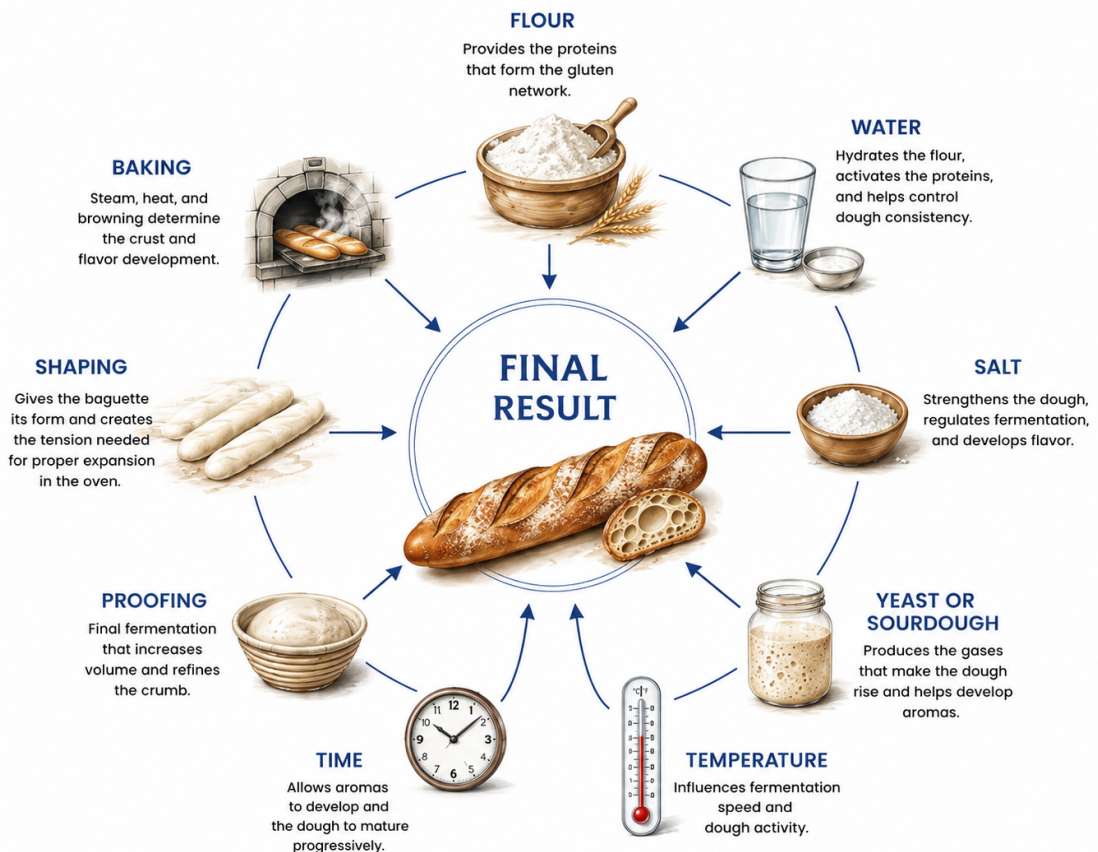
Level	Yield	Key point
Intermediate	4 baguettes 200 g each	fermentation and shaping

UNDERSTANDING THE BAGUETTE

BREAD IS A GLOBAL PROCESS

A baguette contains very few ingredients, but the final result depends on the balance between flour, water, salt, leavening, temperature, mixing, fermentation, shaping, and baking.

Each element influences the others. Changing a single parameter often means adjusting the rest of the process.



UNDERSTANDING THE BALANCE OF THE PROCESS

FLOUR AND WATER

Flour provides the proteins that form the gluten network. A very high-protein flour is not essential: a good all-purpose flour can work perfectly well when hydration, autolyse, and timing are properly adjusted.

Water hydrates the proteins and starch. Higher hydration makes the dough softer and can encourage a more open crumb, but it also makes shaping more delicate.

SALT AND LEAVENING

Salt does more than add flavor. It strengthens the dough and slows fermentation. This recipe uses 13 g of salt per kilogram of flour; this lower amount therefore also influences dough strength and fermentation speed.

Yeast and sourdough produce the gases required for the bread to rise, but they do not affect the dough in exactly the same way.

TIME AND TEMPERATURE

Time cannot be separated from temperature. A warm dough ferments more quickly; a cold dough requires more time.

The times given in the recipe are guidelines. The actual condition of the dough remains the best indicator for deciding when to move on to the next step.



CONTROL POINT

Never try to correct one stage without considering the entire process.

A flat or dense baguette may result from the flour, hydration, fermentation, shaping, proofing, or a combination of several factors.



ORGANIZING THE WORK

The baguette is prepared over two days. This organization spreads out the work and gives the dough time to ferment slowly, allowing it to develop flavor, texture, and digestibility.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Prepare the sourdough starter for the sourdough version.

Weigh all the ingredients.

Make sure there is enough space in the refrigerator for the dough.

Prepare the baking equipment: baking stone, baking steel or baking sheet, as well as the steam system.

Make sure the oven and steam system are working properly.



THE DAY BEFORE	THE DAY OF BAKING
Prepare the autolyse	Divide
Add the salt and leavening	Pre-shape
Mix the dough	Shape
Bulk ferment with a fold	Proof
Refrigerate the dough	Score and bake

SEE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BREAD SECTION

Final dough temperature, base temperature, yeast and sourdough, fermentation, reading the dough, and other important information.

YEAST OR SOURDOUGH BAGUETTE

Both versions use the same dough and follow almost the same process. The total quantities of flour, water, and salt remain identical. Only the leavening changes.

Differences in fermentation time and handling will be explained throughout the method.

INGREDIENTS	YEAST VERSION	SOURDOUGH VERSION
Flour	500 g / 17.64 oz	450 g / 15.87 oz
Water	340 g / 11.99 oz	290 g / 10.23 oz
Salt	7 g / 0.25 oz	7 g / 0.25 oz
Dry yeast	3 g / 0.11 oz	
Sourdough starter		100 g / 3.53 oz

SOURDOUGH: ADVANTAGES AND CONSTRAINTS

Sourdough brings more complex aromas, a slight acidity, and better keeping qualities to the bread. It can also produce a different crumb and crust from those obtained with yeast alone.

In return, it requires more planning. Its activity varies depending on temperature, feeding, and its condition at the time of use. Fermentation times are therefore less predictable and must be adjusted by observing the dough.

Sourdough brings more character, but requires greater control and experience.

UNDERSTANDING THE TWO FORMULAS

Sourdough starter is not added on top of the recipe. Its flour and water are part of the total formula.

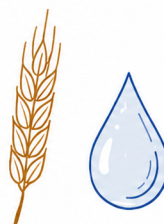


100 g of sourdough starter
at 100% hydration
contains:

- 50 g of flour
- 50 g of water



Therefore, subtract
these amounts
from the flour
and water added
separately.



MIXING AND FERMENTATION

The yeast and sourdough versions follow the same general method. Fermentation times are guidelines and should be adjusted according to dough temperature and leavening activity.

1. AUTOLYSE

Mix all the flour and water until no dry flour remains. Cover and let rest for at least 30 minutes.

SEE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BREAD SECTION

2. ADD SALT AND LEAVENING

After the autolyse, add the salt and the chosen leavening.

YEAST VERSION

Add 3 g / 0.11 oz dry yeast.

SOURDOUGH VERSION

Add 100 g / 3.53 oz sourdough starter at 100% hydration.

3. MIX THE DOUGH

Mix approximately 8 minutes on low speed, then 2 minutes on higher speed.

The dough should become smooth, supple, and sufficiently developed.

CONTROL POINT

The dough should stretch without tearing immediately while remaining supple.

4. BULK FERMENT AND FOLD

Leave the dough at room temperature for approximately 1 hour, then perform one fold to strengthen the dough.

With sourdough, timing may vary depending on starter activity and dough temperature.

CONTROL POINT

The dough should begin to gain volume and feel lighter while still retaining strength.

5. COLD FERMENTATION

Cover and refrigerate for approximately 12 hours.

Cold fermentation develops flavor and organizes the process over two days.

CONTROL POINT

The next day, the dough should be slightly risen, supple, and strong enough to divide and pre-shape.

FROM DIVIDING TO BAKING

6. DIVIDE

Divide the cold dough into 200 g / 7.05 oz pieces. Handle gently to preserve part of the gas developed during fermentation.

7. PRE-SHAPE

Pre-shape each piece into a short, even cylinder.

SEE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BREAD SECTION

8. REST

Let rest for approximately 5 minutes, until the dough can be lengthened without strongly springing back.

9. SHAPE

Lengthen each cylinder gradually from the center toward the ends. Use even pressure to obtain a straight, regular baguette.

10. PROOF

Place on a floured couche or cloth, or directly on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Proof approximately 45 minutes in a proofing box, or 1 to 2 hours at room temperature.

CONTROL POINT

The baguettes should gain volume and feel lighter while remaining strong enough to score without collapsing.

SEE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BREAD SECTION

11. SCORE

Make several cuts almost parallel to the length of the baguette, with slight overlap between them.

SEE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BREAD SECTION

12. BAKE WITH STEAM

Preheat the oven and baking surface to 250°C / 482°F. For a stronger crust, increase up to 260°C / 500°F maximum.

If the oven has no steam system, place a heatproof container of water inside during preheating and leave it in place while baking.

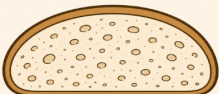
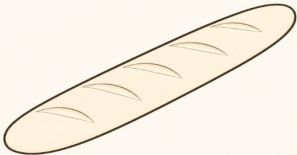
Bake for approximately 20 minutes.

CONTROL POINT

The baguette should be well colored, light, and crisp.

TROUBLESHOOTING

A baguette rarely fails for a single reason. Before changing the recipe, look at the entire process: dough strength, temperature, fermentation, shaping, proofing, scoring, and baking.

FLAT BAGUETTE	Possible causes	Corrections
	Dough over-fermented	
	Proofing too long	Shorten fermentation or proofing
	Dough too weak	Strengthen the dough with an appropriate fold
	Not enough tension during pre-shaping	Create more regular tension during pre-shaping
	Hydration too high for the flour	
CRUMB TOO TIGHT	Possible causes	Corrections
	Insufficient fermentation	Extend fermentation or proofing
	Dough too cold	Check dough temperature
	Excessive degassing	Handle the dough more gently
	Too much pressure during shaping	Use less pressure during final shaping
	Hydration too low	Increase hydration slightly on the next batch
SCORES DO NOT OPEN	Possible causes	Corrections
	Proofing too advanced	Bake slightly earlier
	Incorrect blade angle	Review the scoring technique
	Cuts too short or poorly positioned	Maintain good humidity during proofing
	Insufficient steam	Make sure enough steam is present in the oven
	Dough surface too dry	
PALE BAGUETTE	Possible causes	Corrections
	Oven not sufficiently preheated	Preheat the oven longer
	Temperature too low	Increase the baking temperature
	Baking time too short	Extend baking slightly
	Excessive fermentation	Reduce fermentation if necessary

KEY POINT

Do not correct a baguette by changing several parameters at once.

Observe the result, identify the most likely cause, change one parameter, then compare the next batch.

ONE DOUGH, MANY BREADS

The baguette formula does not produce baguettes only.

The same dough can be used to make several different bread shapes. What changes is not the basic formula, but mainly the dough weight, the shape, the shaping method, proofing, scoring, and baking.



BAGUETTE

A long, regular shape.

Pre-shaping creates a short, even cylinder, which is then lengthened to the desired size.



SMALL ROLLS

Divide the dough into smaller portions.

They bake more quickly and generally provide a higher proportion of crust compared with crumb.



BÂTARD

Shorter and thicker than a baguette.

Its shape produces more crumb and proportionally less crust.



BOULE

The dough is shaped into a round loaf with even surface tension.

This shape works especially well for medium or larger loaves and produces a more generous crumb.



PAN LOAF

The same dough can also be baked in a loaf pan. Place the shaped dough in a lightly greased pan and

allow it to proof before baking. The pan supports the dough as it rises and creates a softer, more

regular shape with a higher proportion of crumb.



ÉPI

An épi is made from a shaped baguette.

Before baking, the dough is cut with scissors and the sections are alternated from side to side.



FOUGASSE

The dough is flattened and cut before baking.

The openings must be wide enough so they do not close again during proofing and baking.

WHAT MUST BE ADJUSTED

When you change the shape or size, remember to adjust:

Dough weight → Shape → Proofing → Scoring → Baking time

A small piece bakes more quickly. A larger loaf requires more time so the heat can reach the center properly.

KEY POINT

THE FORMULA CREATES THE DOUGH. TECHNIQUE GIVES IT ITS SHAPE.

One base dough can become many different breads.

THE BOOK CONTINUES

The Fraisier and the Baguette are only the beginning.

The complete French Artisan Baking System will bring together the essential foundations, techniques and recipes needed to understand French artisan baking as a complete method, not simply as a collection of recipes.

The complete book includes:

BREAD

Sourdough Bread

Baguette

VIENNOISERIE

Croissant

Fraisier • Éclair • Macaron

Napoléon • Black Forest

Fresh Fruit Tart • Quiche

FRENCH PASTRY

THE FOUNDATIONS BEHIND THE RECIPES

Fermentation • Sourdough • Dough Development • Lamination •
Puff Pastry • Choux Pastry • Génoise • Sweet Pastry Dough •
Pastry Cream • Mousseline Cream • Whipped Cream

Each chapter follows the same approach:

FOLLOW → OBSERVE → UNDERSTAND → ADJUST

With control points, visual explanations and troubleshooting designed to help you understand **not only what to do, but why it works**.

HELP BRING THE COMPLETE BOOK TO LIFE

The French Artisan Baking System is now live on Kickstarter.

Your support will help turn this preview into the complete book, bringing together the foundations, techniques, recipes, control points and troubleshooting methods developed through more than thirty-five years of artisan baking.

Support the project on Kickstarter.



SCAN TO DISCOVER THE KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN

Stéphan Martin

French Artisan Baker & Pastry Chef
Founder of Le Petit Paris