



## The River Cottage Bread Handbook

*Daniel Stevens, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall (Introduction)*

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The River Cottage farm, established by British food personality Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall to promote high-quality, local, and sustainable food, has inspired a television series, restaurants and classes, and a hit series of books. In this new addition to the award-winning collection, River Cottage baking instructor Daniel Stevens shares his irrepressible enthusiasm and knowledge to help you bake better bread. From familiar classics such as **ciabatta** and **pizza dough**, to new challenges like **potato bread**, **rye loaves**, **tortillas**, **naan**, **croissants**, **doughnuts**, and **bagels**, each easy-to-follow recipe is accompanied by full-color, step-by-step photos. There's even an in-depth chapter on building your own backyard wood-fired oven.

## The River Cottage Bread Handbook Details

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## From Reader Review The River Cottage Bread Handbook for online ebook

### J says

*The River Cottage Bread Handbook* is aptly named. It offers a quick, entertaining delivery of useful information on the essentials of bread making which has become a favorite pastime of mine.

As a reference book, it's not as wordy or philosophical like Peter Reinhart's, *Brother Juniper's Bread book*, one of my all-time favorites - but it's not meant to be. It is a resource to be perused over and over again. It is not as detailed as Jeffrey Hamelman's *Bread*, and it doesn't need to be. That makes it even better because it is utilitarian; less is more. Even so, Daniel Stevens is anything but boring. His book is a witty and enjoyable read that can be taken up in a couple of sittings. But be forewarned; the information will take longer to settle in; it is a great guide for those who want to learn by doing. It is a hands-on learner's kind of book.

The 'How-to' build a back-yard read oven section is weak - mostly because this guy is a bread maker and not an oven builder. If you want a good reference book on bread ovens, try *The Bread Builders*.

This is a fine book to have in any bread maker's arsenal along with Peter Reinhart's bread books and Jim Lahey's *My Bread* plus a couple of others. It's a great little book well worth the fifteen bucks it is selling for online.

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### Nikki says

Did a basic bread making course which I enjoyed, brought this book, followed the recipe using steam to make the bread - bread didn't turn out well. Recipe for sour dough starter has too large quantities and recommends throwing half away when 'feeding' it - how wasteful.

I then did an artisan bread making course and got proper instructions for making sour dough starter and sour dough. Other bread making books I have read are far easier to understand than this one. Rather disappointing as I like watching River Cottage on TV.

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### Daisy says

This is a handy book, easy to hold; that is, it's not a coffee-table book so it's more convenient to move around the kitchen. It has a sourdough section which hasn't taught me anything I didn't know (yet) but would be good for a beginner. (It's just that I'm a Tartine Bread disciple.) And it's got lots of tempting recipes and a good section on Buns, Biscuits and Batter Breads which has recipes for crackers, blinis, doughnuts, crumpets. So it's versatile and I'm glad I have it.

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### Mara Shaw says

The first 76 pages of the book are solely about exactly how to make your bread perfect every time with loads of very useful pictures. It changed the way I make bread and I appreciated the thoroughness of the presentation.

Of all of his great take-away tips, my favourite is using a big (clean) trash (rubbish) bag to cover the rising dough instead of clingfilm (Saran Wrap) which must be thrown away every time. The bags can be reused multiple times and don't get stuck like tea towels. (Note: I have since read that one must be careful as some rubbish bags are non-food grade. One can buy food-grade bags, which seems really wise. The dough shouldn't be in contact with the bag, but sometimes it is when the dough is at its peak.)

Having tried the bagel recipe 3 times (with my 3-strikes and you're out rule), my results are better with recipes and techniques presented by old Jewish men, so I'm sticking with them instead of Daniel's.

But on the whole, thank you, Daniel. I'm forever in your debt for this wonderful book.

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### **Marjanne says**

There's some interesting description of technique to making bread. Though it doesn't say it explicitly, the bread seems more like artisan-style bread, rather than run-of-the-mill white loaves. I like that the author was somewhat thorough in describing how the bread dough should look and feel. There's a variety of recipes and I especially want to try the sourdough. I'll probably hold on to this book to try out a couple of the recipes, but I'm not sure it's something that I feel like I need to own.

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### **Heather says**

This is an excellent handbook for the beginning or intermediate bread baker. Has wonderful tips and explanations and techniques and dives into the world of wild yeast. I'll keep this with me from now until forever!! Wonderful reference.

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### **Problemchild says**

Compact, witty and utilitarian, Daniel Stevens is one of the worlds great communicators teaching the basics of this skill in a manner that gives confidence to the novice. This is a cracking read; you'll never go back to commercial bread again.

He proves (forgive the pun) that bread making need not be highly technical or take long. Runny dough? No worries, if you've really got a cock up on your hands get a handful of pasta dura flour and turn it out into soft fluffy ciabattas. His descriptions of the dough are great and there's even pictures of what should happen. Bonus!

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## **Country Goose says**

This book has excellent information. As an amateur bread maker, I have read a lot on the basics of bread making, and this book has turned into my bible of bread making. I carry it around my house, reading it when I am not otherwise occupied by my farm/family. The author has an entertaining sense of humor to help grasp the concept of "why" we make certain decisions in the bread making processes. "As there are several billion cells of grain, this is a reproduction rate of which rabbits could only dream." - Daniel Stevens  
:)

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## **Kelly says**

I want to own this book. Might spark flour conversations with fellow bread enthusiasts!

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## **Dean says**

While I have a lot of books on baking bread, none is as charming as this little gem. As with the other books in the River Cottage series, this is an engaging work that has many really practical and useful tips in it as well as some inspiring recipes. This book's bread recipes are unique in that they offer variables in the uses of the recipes to offer variety for the weekly baker. I want to own this.

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## **Susanne Sleep says**

An excellent introduction to making your own bread. Enough sciencey stuff for the home cook to grab onto without feeling overwhelmed. Lots of clearly written recipes, the photography is simple but lovely and the River Cottage slow living philosophy flows through each page. Most importantly, every bread I have made from this book (so far about half) have been perfect tasting. YUM!

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## **Amelia says**

This is a nice book in some ways. I loved the tone of the introduction, some of the information, and the range of recipes offered. Then I tried 2 recipes this weekend. I have been baking bread for a couple of years now, and I was a little suspicious of the proportions suggested. Sure enough, these recipes call for way too little liquid and way too much salt, resulting in tough, unpalatable breads.

I think it might be all right if you upped the liquid proportion appropriately and cut the salt in half, or to even less, but meanwhile, I am disappointed.

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### **Jade says**

This book serves as a brilliant history of bread and its creation. I used to work in a bakery so I was really interested in learning anything I could about baking. Do you know what the Chorleywood process is? What the real differences are between mass produced and home made bread are? What's great about the River Cottage book is that it speaks plainly and teaches old techniques and tips and tricks. Although I don't have access to proving baskets, baking stones or a 'peel', I know to use a black bin liner to help prove and a water spray bottle is really helpful! The recipes are easy to understand and tasty too!

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### **Dan says**

I never thought I'd use the phrase "couldn't put it down" in regards to a cookbook, but I just did.

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### **Tim says**

One a series of mini books ( in dimension, not content ) by people who have connections with River Cottage, mainly as demonstrators and guest chefs on their training courses.

For anyone who wants to get into baking for the first time or who wants to extend from the basic loaf to something less mundane, this is it. There's also probably something new for experienced bakers too!

Reasonable price, pocket size so you'd find room in the corner of your kitchen, ticks all the boxes.

As all in this series, foreword by Hugh F - W.

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