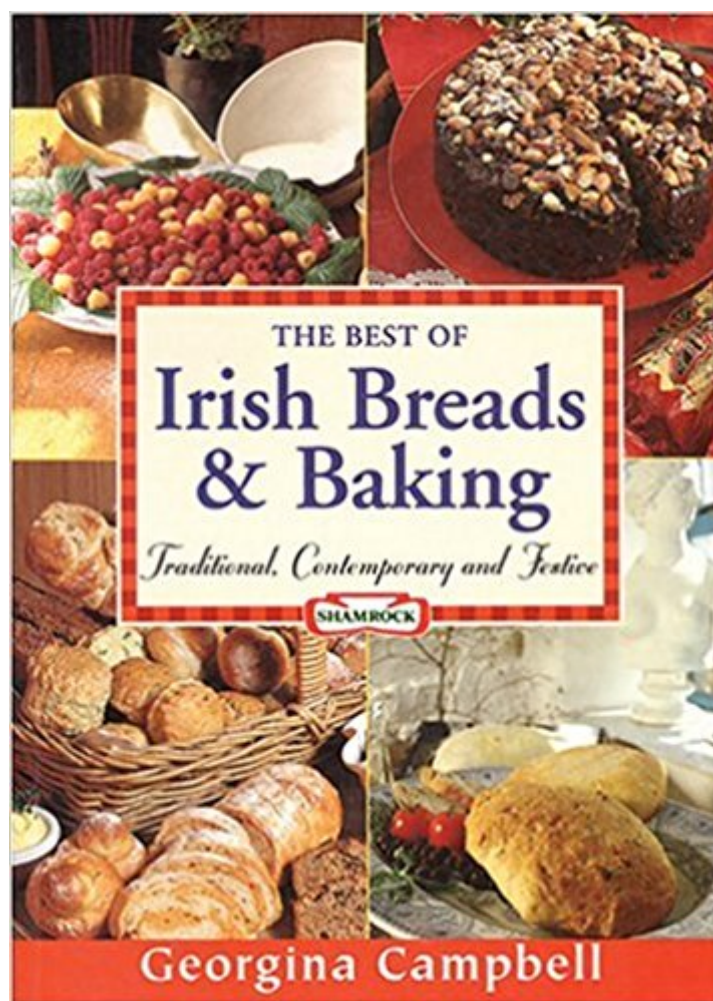


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The Best Of Irish Breads & Baking: Traditional, Contemporary & Festive



Synopsis

This volume presents a mouth-watering collection of baking recipes - from traditional breads to treats and temptations. This is a sumptuous volume that gathers the very best of Irish breads and baking - from well-loved old favourites to unusual temptations and everything in between - that will appeal to novices and seasoned bakers alike. "The Best of Irish Breads and Baking" covers every aspect of the baking process - from getting and using the right ingredients to the delicious aroma of the finished article. Also included is a special section on baking for Christmas and other festive occasions, as well as a chapter on making and matching preserves to breads and bakes. All of which are accompanied by handsome full-colour photography.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Georgina Campbell is Ireland's leading writer on all aspects of Irish food and hospitality. She is a regular contributor to a number of newspapers and magazines.

'The Best of Irish Breads & Baking' by Georgina Campbell, sponsored by the Irish company, Shamrock Foods, is the third book of Irish baking I have reviewed, and it nicely fits between the areas covered by Tim Allen's 'The Ballymaloe Bread Book' and Margaret M. Johnson's 'Irish Puddings, Tarts, Crumbles, and Fools'. Before comparing the three books in detail, I'll survey Ms. Campbell's contents. This is a very nicely sized, relatively inexpensive book, listing at \$15 or 15 euros which concentrates, like Ms. Johnson, on recipes from local Irish baking and hospitality establishments. The chapters, with virtually no surprises, are: Soda Breads and Scones, confirming

once again that THE classic Irish bread is a brown soda bread and not the familiar Irish-American all white flour soda bread. I was pleased to find, however, a recipe for that familiar Irish-American soda bread with many flavorings added. One of the more unusual sections in this chapter is a method for making buttermilk from skimmed milk and yeast. I find immense irony in this method, as yeast is being used to make an ingredient for a yeastless quick bread. It also gives the yogurt method for making buttermilk, but makes no mention of the quick sour milk method or of powdered 'instant buttermilk' products. Hot Off the Griddle covers things which many people may not consider 'baking' as they are recipes to be made from batters on top of the stove, including cakes made from batters with oats, potatoes (for boxty), apples, and flour. If you happen to be a big breakfast fan, this chapter may alone be worth the price of admission. Tea Breads, Bracks, & Buns cover what in the United States would tend to be lumped together as muffins and their allies such as gingerbread and fruit breads. Yeast Breads explores baking with packaged yeasts, either fresh brewer's yeast or dried yeast packets. One interesting fact in this chapter is that Irish wheat is soft, much like that from the southern United States such as White Lily flour. The explanation for the Irish love of soda bread is not this, but the fact that few Irish households had the kinds of ovens needed for baking yeasted breads. This may not be complete, as the same could probably be said of Italy, one of the capitals of yeasted bread traditions. While this chapter focuses on native Irish recipes, there are a fair number of imports from the Mediterranean using things like onion and garlic in the breads. Cakes and Biscuits is the chapter which contains the recipes for the kind of seed cakes and biscuits which Bilbo Baggins probably served to Thorin Oakenshield, his band of dwarfs, and Gandalf the wizard in that magical moment at the beginning of the novel, 'The Hobbit'. If you are a Tolkien fan, this chapter alone may be worth the book. Note that biscuits, here, is the English sense of biscuits as 'cookies' and not what we recognize as, for example, southern buttermilk biscuits, which are much more similar to Irish scones. Pastry and Puddings involves another English / Irish usage which may be unfamiliar to Americans, as 'puddings' here refers primarily to desserts, primarily those made with custards. Oddly, the lion's share of recipes in this chapter are for cakes, pies, and tarts, rather than custard based desserts. There is another fair share of European influence in recipes for strudel (Austrian) and frangipane (French). Festive Fare is one of my favorite kinds of chapters, as it gives recipes for occasions where you get an excuse to bake something delicious and fattening. I'm especially fond of these Irish dishes, as they contain the mother lode of inspirations for mincemeat pies and fruitcakes. The emphasis here is on Christmas, Easter, and Halloween, our favorite culinary holidays other than Thanksgiving. If you have room for only one book on Irish baking, especially if you don't have a lot of books on general baking techniques, this is the best of the three

books I cite here. Tim Allen's Ballymaloe book ranges far beyond Ireland, because his focus is what is made at the Ballymaloe restaurants for their guests, not what is traditional in Ireland. Thus, he includes a chapter on sourdough plus chapters on major Italian specialties such as pizza. Ms. Campbell does not touch sourdough (using natural yeasts) at all. Since Campbell covers both desserts and bread baking, it is also more general than Johnson's book on desserts. And, Campbell goes into a bit more detail on general baking technique, although not as much as the great bread baking specialists such as Peter Reinhart. I am especially happy to say all measurements are in both metric and English systems and for things like flour, both weight (lb or grams) and volumetric (cups) units are given. This is another reason to pick this book if you can only have one. Otherwise, all three books have much to offer. Highly recommended.

I have had this book for years and just bought a few more for friends now on ...as they say my copy and wanted it!..I have had it since my years ago working in one of the properties that the book takes some recipes from! And it is my favourite baking book, I have made most of the recipes from it, I have made almost all the brown bread recipes to find my favourite one is Ashford Castles one and also Mary Ann's one too! The yoghurt loaf recipe and the Banana Bread (one with marmalade, Cashel House I think) are amazing!... I have a friend who swears by the Chocolate and Hazelnut cake..there's a picture of it in the book. Georgina Campbell is a great cookery writer, fantastic recipes. If you like baking and want traditional Irish and practical recipes, this is the book for you. I would highly recommend it! Buy it! and happy baking! Fiona

Good and authentic recipes from one of Ireland's best known baking experts of many years ago.

I ordered the whole meal flour to make some of these breads. Very good assortment of recipes -- everyone I made was good.

This book has lots of variations to recipes and that encourages you to try your own variation. I found the book great, lots of pictures and the stories of the origins of the recipes is enjoyable.

This cook book arrived in great condition and has beautiful pictures. Ideas and writing are easy to follow and will create great dinners.

I used a friend's copy of this book for a specific recipe (whole wheat banana bread). I've tried many

of the other recipes and I've not found one I don't like. I HAD to buy my own copy. The food is tasty, appealing and chock full of healthy ingredients. It's nice to find a cookbook with so much variety and great alternatives to grocery store premade baked item. This is a keeper!!!

This book has a surprising amount of recipes in it for a small sized book. It is clearly written and simple to follow. It has a nice variety of breads. I have baked a few of the recipes and they are delightful. The little histories written before the recipes are fun to read and gives them their authenticity. I have over 200 cookbooks and must be choosy. I am glad to add this book to my collection.

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