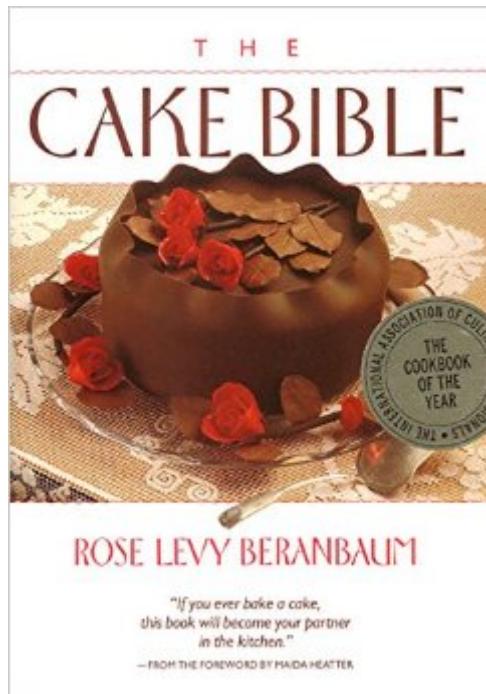


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# The Cake Bible



## Synopsis

"If you ever bake a cake, this book will become your partner in the kitchen." -- from the foreword by Maida Heatter

This is the classic cake cookbook that enables anyone to make delicious, exquisite cakes. As a writer for food magazines, women's magazines, and newspapers, including The New York Times, Rose Levy Beranbaum's trademark is her ability to reduce the most complex techniques to easy-to-follow recipes. Rose makes baking a joy. This is the definitive work on cakes by the country's top cake baker. The Cake Bible shows how to:

- Mix a buttery, tender layer cake in under five minutes with perfect results every time
- Make the most fabulous chocolate cake you ever imagined with just three ingredients
- Find recipes for every major type of cake, from pancakes to four-tiered wedding cakes
- Make cakes with less sugar but maximum flavor and texture
- Make many low- to no- cholesterol, low-saturated-fat recipes

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (451 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

While it's difficult to add much to the other reviews of "The Cake Bible", I do have a couple of thoughts that might help resolve some of the conflicting reports. Like a few of the other reviewers, I have found this to be a frustrating book, even for someone with culinary training. Let me make one thing clear -- I really want to like it. The book is comprehensive and authoritative, and the author, Rose Levy Beranbaum, tries very hard to communicate. What isn't covered in the text is usually addressed in the extensive margin notes or footnotes. With strengths like that, it would seem impossible for any recipe to fail. But, many recipes do fail, sometimes spectacularly. How is that possible? The reasons are many and varied. First, my sense is that the recipes themselves are

fragile. While ingredient measures are expressed in precise units (you'd better own a scale), the instructions must be executed to the letter. No step can be compromised; no corner can be cut. Exact pan sizes and oven temperatures must be used. The ingredients are carefully balanced. If you're off by just a little, the cake will fail. Hence, I don't approach the recipes in this book with the sort of unhesitating confidence I would like. It often takes several tries to get a cake right. Second, the recipes don't take kindly to substitutions. Once, I came up a little short on sour cream and tried to substitute some plain yogurt in the Sour Cream Coffee Cake. The recipe wasn't robust enough to accommodate the additional water provided by the yogurt, and the cake fell. To make these cakes, you need to triple-check the ingredients list before you start. Third, only the highest quality ingredients can be used. The Mousseline Buttercream is a good example. Since it uses only egg whites instead of yolks or whole eggs, and since there isn't much sugar, the only flavor notes come from the butter. Anything less than the highest quality will result in a final product that is greasy and horrible. And the additional liquor flavoring in many recipes is not optional. It is often required to compensate for the relative lack of sugar. Finally, the author's encouragement notwithstanding, the Showcase Cakes are legitimately complicated. Each of them has a number of components, some with multiple sub-components, and each cake takes several days to construct. The Blueberry Swan Lake, for example, calls for 2 meringue swans with piped whipped cream feathers. The White Lilac Nostalgia cake requires dozens of crystallized lilac blossoms, each prepared carefully by hand. And I'd love to see anyone's first crack at the red chocolate roses and 20 chocolate rose leaves required for the Bittersweet Royale Torte. In fairness, however, it should be noted that some of the fundamental recipes are real breakthroughs (or at least they were when the book was written in 1988). The Moist Chocolate Genoise, for example, uses bar chocolate instead of the cocoa. The cocoa butter in the chocolate replaces the clarified butter that would normally be added to a cake of this type. The result is a chocolate genoise unlike any other I've ever tasted. While many are stiff and dry, this cake is tender and moist. In addition, the Neo-Classic Buttercream offers a worthwhile shortcut to the preparation of the sugar syrup. A special bonus is the wedding cake section. These pages thoroughly describe the construction of a 'standard' wedding cake, right down to the amount of buttercream required for each layer. Recipes are offered for yellow and chocolate butter cake, yellow and chocolate genoise, and cheesecake. Every step along the way is described in detail, and the designs, while challenging, are generally more accessible than those from, say, Colette Peters or Dede Wilson. In sum, while it's easy to make a decent cake, it's a big step to the next level. What this book underscores is the amount of preparation, concentration, and effort it takes to make an exceptional cake. If that is your goal, then this book could well offer the road map you're looking

for. Note added 4/12/2012 -- I am suddenly receiving a fair number of private emails about this 11-year-old review, almost all critical of my comment that the recipes don't take kindly to substitutions. At the time this book was written, modifying basic cakes was standard practice. In fact, books were written on how to add this, that, and the other thing to a standard cake recipe to achieve new and interesting results. My review was intended to point out the the recipes in "The Cake Bible" are not those kind of recipes. If you'd like to make the cakes in this book, you'd better have the right pans, a stand mixer, a gram scale and a calibrated oven. In particular, the mixing procedure when executed correctly produces a cake that can be wonderfully light. But the structure is less robust than the standard procedure offered in most books. It's worth noting that that this procedure has not become the culinary standard in the decade since it was introduced.

I'm not an experienced baker and although I don't mind baking, I will admit that I like eating cake more than I do baking it. However the recipes from The Cake Bible have brought me so many rave reviews that I look forward to making them. For a special occasion several years ago I made a three-tiered Golden Genoise with a raspberry buttercream and marzipan roses, and there are people who still marvel about it. I've also made the Black Forest cake, the Triple Chocolate cake, and the Cordon Rose Cream cheesecake with great success. The coffeecake and the blueberry buttermilk pancakes are now family classics, and for my own birthday I always make the Perfect All-American Chocolate Butter cake with a Milk Chocolate buttercream. These are real cakes, similar to great ones I've had in Vienna, London, and New York, that rely on the flavor of the ingredients rather than the overwhelming sweetness prevalent in the typical American cakes. Most of them do use a lot of butter and eggs, and there's no margarine, powdered icing sugar, or artificial flavourings in these, so be forewarned. I find them no more difficult than recipes from any other book, but the end result is light-years ahead. The fancier versions of the decorated cakes can be intimidating since my manual dexterity is somewhere below that of a dyslexic orangutan's, but even if my decorations aren't picture perfect they have a kind of funky charm, and still taste good. In any case, unless it's for a special event, it's not necessary to make them fancy. The recipes have been constructed from scratch so that the ingredients and techniques make perfect sense chemically, rather than having been recopied from existing ones. It's difficult to look at other cake recipes now.

I've own an original 1988 copy since 1988. This is the only cake recipe book I use. I am not a professional cook, but I am experienced. My Mom also baked. Everyone is correct on their reviews. Recipes are not for the inexperienced or the cook that wants to learn how to bake. Not all, but many

recipes require precise ingredient selection and measurement; you can't substitute. Rose explains in detail why she chooses an ingredient instead of another; she tells you what one does that the other does not; she tells you why use Dutch Processed Cocoa instead of Chocolate and viceversa; she tells you why use sour cream instead of butter and viceversa; she tells you why use unsalted butter instead of regular butter; she tells you about baking powder types and quantities depending on your pan size. After near 15 years reading this book, I am able to substitute. I successfully used semisweet chocolate chips in place of Dutch Processed Cocoa for her marvelous chocolate butter cake recipe. My 200 guests were happy. I've learned many good and impressive things the average cook admires when they come to my dining table. The best is the caramel cage; I make caramel cages for many uses; to hold fresh fruits, as a stand for a ball of cheese or freshly whipped flavored butter, as a garnish for a main entree, etc. I've made star shaped caramel cages, squares, buckets, cylinders, you name it. All it needs is sugar and water and aluminum foil, and those are present in any kitchen. The triple chocolate cake is the best chocolate cake you can desire. Rose is correct when she says, this is a triple orgasm, or a triple presence of chocolate in its best representation; You bite into a moist-airy-grainy-spongy chocolate genoise cake that is layered with silky creamy chocolate ganache and then all covered with hard chocolate praline sheets. She chose with exactitude the addition of Frangelico liquor and hazelnut praline. Let me tell you, making chocolate genoise cake is delicate and requires a large mixing bowls, this is a chocolate cake without baking powder so the resulting flavor is pure chocolate without the chemical disflavors that baking powder adds when it reacts against chocolate. You can't show off how you make your chocolate genoise, you can't have your dog or distracting family members in the kitchen when you are folding the yolk mixture into the egg white mixture. Yes, indeed out of 10 times making it, 3 times the genoise cake became flat, my fault. The mouseline butter cream is a master thesis on its own. I am glad somebody mentioned it in the reviews. It is an act of acrobatics and chemistry, plus a touch of magic. It is hard to believe and explain that a mix of egg whites, water, and sugar can blend with soft butter. It is hard to believe Rose when she says to not be alarmed that the mix will initially look like a puddle of unmixable butter floating like oil on water, and that your end result is the best bodied butter cream you can have (if you follow all her rules, yes RULES and not RECOMMENDATIONS). You end up with a silky buttercream, that is light, not so sweet, not so greasy, and not so heavy, that will stand at room temperature for days or that will not lose its shape or body even after abusing it with food coloring or making extravagant cake pipings. And absolutely, the addition of 3 oz of sweet liquor of your choice is a MUST. 3 oz is 3 shots of liquor, quite a lot. Before adding the sweet liquor, the mouseline butter cream tastes not so good (buttery and not so sweet) and in fact, the body is

even better and silkier after adding the 3 oz of liquor. I am sure, if you choose not to add liquor, try find out how much sugar are in 3 oz of sweet liquor and how much water (less the alcohol evaporation), and you might be able to substitute by increasing the amount of sugar and water in the egg white mix. I do have one recommendation: if you are using the recipe Rose wrote with the liquor, make your butter cream 3 to 5 days before you use the buttercream, or frost your cake 12 to 24 hours. This will allow time for the alcohol to disappear. Hey, and what is wrong to not use egg yolks in buttercream? It is healthier and you end up with the purest white possible butter cream. The same goes with all her recipes that call for adding syrup with liquor. She makes it a rule if you are baking before than 1 day in advance, then add liquor. In conclusion this is NOT a book for beginners or cooks that want to start baking. This is a book for the baker or for the cook the loves to read cookbooks. I indeed have ALL of Rose's books, and all share my same reviews: The Pastry Bible, The Bread Bible, Rose's Celebrations, etc. Rose is unique and her writing style is product of her own research. Good luck.

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