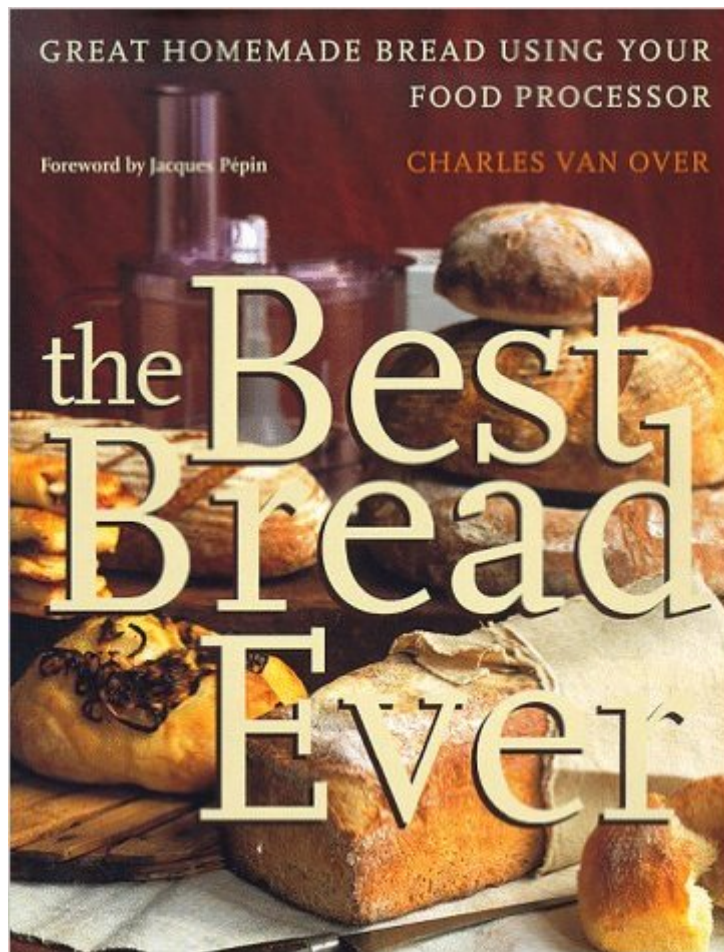


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# The Best Bread Ever: Great Homemade Bread Using Your Food Processor



## Synopsis

When Charlie van Over makes his bread, he breaks all the rules of classic bread baking. He doesn't proof the yeast. He uses cold water instead of warm. He mixes the dough in a food processor for forty-five seconds instead of kneading it by hand. He lets the dough rise in a cool place. The results? Perfect crusty-on-the-outside baguettes with texture, taste, and aroma. Light brioche with buttery crisp crusts and fluffy, saffron interiors. Chewy bagels with hardy, smooth crusts. A rich walnut loaf studded with nuts and scented with the full flavor of whole wheat. A homey cherry babka with a crunchy cinnamon sugar topping. How is this possible? Like many inventors, Charlie came across his technique by accident. At a party for Carl Sontheimer, founder of Cuisinart, the company that first introduced the food processor to American home cooks, it was suggested to Charlie that he mix his dough in a food processor. Thus began several years of experimentation and, finally, a foolproof method for making perfect bread every time. Now you can re-create Charlie van Over's great bread for yourself. And what's even more amazing is that Charlie's is a hands-off, rather than a hands-on, method. Once the dough is mixed in the food processor, there's no kneading. Just place it in a bowl at room temperature to allow the flavors to develop. Have to run out suddenly for a few hours? No problem. Just put the dough in the refrigerator until you're ready. You won't have to keep baker's hours or become a professional to make wonderful bread at home. Once you've mastered the basic technique, the possibilities are endless. Fougasse, Ciabatta, Semolina Bread, pizza, Danish Twists, and even sourdough Olive Rosemary Bread and Idaho Potato Rolls. Have a favorite bread? Charlie even explains how to convert any recipe to The Best Bread Ever method. The Best Bread Ever provides easy-to-follow instructions for more than sixty breads, step-by-step photographs, helpful advice for troubleshooting your food processor, rich color photographs of Charlie's bread, and recipes for using bread in bread puddings, soups, and other dishes. As Jacques Pépin says in his foreword, "Get your ingredients and equipment together and follow Charlie's remarkable method. You will never be without good bread again."

## Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Broadway Books; 1st edition (November 3, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0767900324

ISBN-13: 978-0767900324

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 7.5 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (62 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #423,130 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Kitchen Appliances > Food Processors #345 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Baking > Bread

## Customer Reviews

Three reasons to get this book:- Technique- Information- Recipes  
**TECHNIQUE** Technique is what got me: I've been baking breads at home for years. It's fun, the results are pleasing and well-received by friends and guests. But making bread at home has always been time consuming for me because of the lack of a professional mixer. This point is worth discussing here: If you want to knead bread without working hard and without making a mess, you need a professional mixer. Some home mixers or even hand mixers come with dough hooks, but don't be deceived: Very few home mixers are powerful enough to knead bread dough, and those that are are very expensive. There is no ordinary garden variety cheap mixer that can knead bread dough. Period. Trust me on this one, and you won't burn your mixer's motor and burn your money as well. So you either knead dough by hand, which is time consuming and hard work, or you get this [rather inexpensive] book and learn the technique of using your ordinary food processor to do the job. Food processors work differently from mixers, and even a cheap food processor is powerful enough to knead bread dough using the technique described in the book. I should know -- I bought my food processor over 8 years ago for about US\$40 in a supermarket... It's old and it's so weak that a fresh carrot could make it stick and halt. But I've been making batches and batches of great bread dough with it and so far it's been great. If you are careful with the water and learn to add it gradually, you can actually eliminate measurements: You keep adding water gradually until the ball of dough is formed. If you go over a bit, just add a spoon of flour to try out the batch. It's quick, it's painless, and you can have perfect bread dough in under 1 minute (!). I think that no professional home or restaurant-class mixer can do that. Once you get the hang of using a food processor to knead dough perfectly in under a minute, you will be more willing to experiment with bread making at home. It just won't be that big of a chore anymore.  
**INFORMATION** The Best Bread Ever is not just a bunch of recipes for making bread. It will teach you all you need to know about the process of bread making: What flours to use, how much salt, what temperature is best, how to proof your bread, etc. There is no guesswork, there is no "feel" that takes forever to develop. Just read the introductory chapter and you'll know

everything you need. RECIPES The Best Bread Ever is filled with recipes. Most are great. I found some of the Middle Eastern recipes a bit off, but that's a minor point. From baguettes to Brioche to Pizza, the book is filled with great recipes and great ideas you can follow and/or improvise on. But the bulk of my enthusiasm is reserved for the dough making technique. It's simply ingenious. I cannot over-emphasise the difference it will make in your bread making experience: Take the hardest, nastiest, messiest part of making bread and tame it completely, into a trivial process that takes just under a minute, and you will be free to enjoy the more creative aspects of making bread.

Anyone who is still mixing and kneading bread the traditional way is obviously doing it for some other reason than the quality of the bread. This book makes breadmaking so easy that a novice can turn out perfect baguettes and European breads by following the steps in each recipe. Even after 20+ years of baking, this is truly the best bread I've ever made. The explanations are precise, easy to follow, and have been adapted to different kinds of food processors. I bought the book for the recipes, but the first fifty pages of text were fascinating and essential to learning this new and exciting method of the ancient craft of breadmaking. You definitely want this book in your cooking library.

I would not have purchased this book, based upon the method described. I didn't believe it would work. However, after reading the customer reviews, I took a chance. I am glad I did, although the initial scepticism was borne out. The techniques described will produce acceptable to good baguettes. However, once you move on to loaves, you will be in trouble. The recipes are fine, but for really good results I found, through trial and error, that nothing compares to mixing the ingredients in the food processor just long enough for them to be combined, then (preferably after covering and waiting for 5-10 mins), putting the dough into a standing mixer with the dough hook for 3.5 to 4.0 minutes. The resulting dough is far superior to anything else I have tried and there is no comparison to the dough produced using just the food processor. (Shirley Corriher "Cookwise: The Hows and Whys of Successful Cooking" also gave up on food processors as the sole mixer and I agree). The only other suggestion is that if your kitchen is 20C (68F) or less, you will need to add to the proving time. Don't be put off by these remarks. The recipes are very good, with the above qualifications.

If you've never baked a loaf of bread or if you are an avid baker, this is the book for you. Charlie Van Over's "The Best Bread Book Ever" will teach you a bread baking technique that will add pleasure and taste to all your efforts. The use of a food processor as a kneading tool is not new, but

his specific method is. Based on long years of experience, Van Over has developed such a precise process, you can only succeed. You will get bread that is more tasty, dough that is friendly to work with, and raves from your eating audience. I have tried numbers of baguette recipes, including the one I learned at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, and his outstrips them all. The pizza dough is perfect (better than just best!); because he provides instructions from start to finish, you can serve up a pizza that will make you pause before ever ordering out again. The book includes a wide range of recipes, including a lovely feta and herb focaccia, a rich, delicious brioche with variations, and several sourdough breads. (Unlike some intimidating starter recipes, his is both simple and effective.) Happily, your own favorites are adaptable to his technique. Importantly, his writing style gives you the eerie and pleasant feeling that he is right by your side as you measure the ingredients, pulse the food processor, shape the dough, and slide it onto the baking stone. Bake and eat...you'll have a great time with Charlie!

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