



BETTER BAKER  
BOOTCAMP

# SECRETS TO GREAT BAKING!

Adelaide Bakes



BETTER BAKER BOOTCAMP  
MONDAY 3RD - SUNDAY 16TH MAY 2021

# Secrets to Great Baking

## CREATE A CONSISTENT ENVIRONMENT TO ACHIEVE A CONSISTENT OUTCOME

The best way to set ourselves up for successful baking is by creating a controlled environment in our kitchen. When we limit variables we start to achieve better and more consistent results.

So, what are the things that we need to understand about our kitchen / environment to get the best results?

Broken down into 5 components.

- Practice good habits
- Get to know your oven
- Understand the ingredients
- Understand the technique & create your own rules
- Get to know the signs of a baked cake
- Don't be afraid to fail - choose function over form

## PRACTICE GOOD HABITS

Be prepared :

Read the recipe thoroughly

Have the ingredients you need available & prep in advance where you can

Have the equipment you need available

Take the time to weigh ingredients properly before you begin baking

Line baking tins / trays neatly

Pre-heat your oven thoroughly - at least 15 - 20 minutes before you begin baking

Bring ingredients to room temperature

We can all be impatient when it comes to baking, but it really is in paying close attention to the small details that will set us up for success with recipes.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR OVEN

This is a big one and can take some time to figure out.

Not all ovens work equally

Get to know the quirks of your own oven;

- Does it run hot?
- Run cold?
- Does it have a hot spot? Where?
- Is the fan strong? Weak? Can it be turned off?
- Do things just take a little longer to bake in your oven?

Remember there is no one way that works best, but only what works best for you and your oven.

Understand that any temperature given in a recipe should be used as a guide.

When you get to know your own oven you'll get to know what your baked goods need without relying too much on time.



# Secrets to Great Baking

## UNDERSTAND THE INGREDIENTS & THEIR FUNCTION

The ingredients used in our baked goods perform 6 main functions:

Structure building – flours, cocoa powder

Tenderising – sugar, butter, oils, egg yolks

Providing moisture – oil, milk, juice

Binding – eggs, water

Flavouring (and flavour enhancers)– vanilla, salt, zests, extracts

Raising agents (not always applicable) – baking powder, baking soda, whipped egg whites, whipped whole eggs

When we create a new recipe or adjust an old one we need to incorporate the main ingredient elements.

When we adjust recipes it's important to understand the function of the ingredient and find an alternative to replace the function of the ingredient we removed or reduced so we don't alter the end result. This is mainly visible when we take a wheat based recipe and try to adjust it to accommodate for dietary intolerances, sometimes it takes a while to achieve the desired end result.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TECHNIQUE & CREATING RULES

Sometimes not paying attention to the technique can give us poor results, like trying to cream butter and sugar for a cake with butter that is too cold, or making cookies with butter that is too soft.

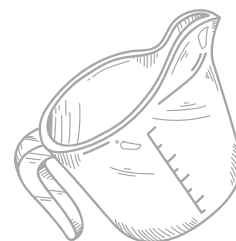
Each of these will give us a result that we don't want being either heavy / dense cakes or cookies that spread too much and lost their shape, even if all of the ingredients were weighed out properly.

Some recipes also work better with certain techniques, take for example my cupcakes. Cupcakes made with wheat flour work best when the butter and sugar are creamed together until light and fluffy. Gluten free cupcakes need almost a 'melt & mix' method and tend to collapse when too much air is incorporated.

Understanding the technique can also help us troubleshoot when we achieve poor results.

Getting to know the right technique can take time, try not to get discouraged and try different variations until you achieve the result you like.

Create rules around your baking, such as the size cakes a particular recipe creates, how many cupcakes are achieved from one 'batch' of batter, how much batter fills one pan etc. When we create recipes often our rules will help achieve consistent outcomes / items and batches.







# Secrets to Great Baking

## SIGNS OF A BAKED CAKE

The baking times listed on a recipe are best used as a guide.

It's important to get to know the signs of a baked cake / cookie and not remove your baked goods from the oven until they are completely baked. Baking times will vary not only between ovens but also based on the different sizes, thicknesses and density of products being baked.

Signs of a cake that is ready include:

- Smell – when our baked goods are nearly baked they should have a delicious caramelized aroma Cakes / cupcakes & loaves should be golden in colour (unless they're chocolate, then it's a little more difficult to tell).
- The batter should look set, when the oven door is opened there should be no batter wobbling on the surface.
- When you gently touch the surface of a cake / cupcake it should feel soft and springy to the touch and an indent should quickly spring back. If an indent remains in your cake / cupcake bake for a further 3-4 minutes and check again.
- A skewer inserted into the centre of the cake / cupcake should come out clean. If the cake is a mud cake or has a firm crust remove some of the crust with a paring knife and insert the skewer into the section with the top removed.

Never remove any baked product from the oven until you're sure it's completely baked as they will collapse when there is no hot air supporting the structure.

## DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL

One of the biggest things I encourage new bakers to do is go for it. To become really confident with any recipe or technique we all need to practice it over and over again. We might achieve different results each time, but each time you'll get to know the recipe, techniques, the characteristics and your oven better and better.

To begin with choose function over form. To me, a baked good must be delicious, before I work on making it look a particular way. If you have a recipe that tastes great you can work on making it look better, but it's usually more difficult the other way around.

Practice consistency, keeping the way you work predictable and limiting variables will help you achieve more consistent outcomes with your baking.

Enjoy the process!