



*How to
Be
Fearless
in the
Kitchen!*

*My Gift
to you
for joining
the PCO
Community*

Welcome to the Pastry Chef Online Community! (That's PCO to you and me.) Thank you so much for allowing me to speak with you on a topic I'm passionate about!

Do you get nervous when just contemplating tackling a new baking or cooking project?

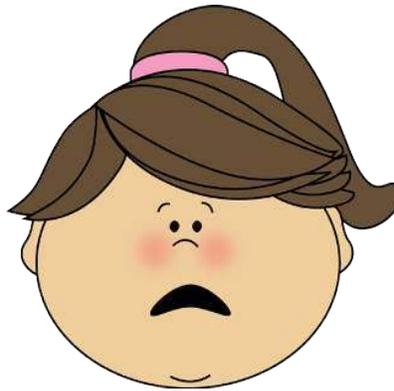
Do you ever have a recipe turn out with a much different texture than you were expecting?

Does it make you feel queasy to make substitutions in a recipe?

If you answered **YES** to any of these questions, I can help you.

LEARN TO BE FEARLESS!

While it might be true that some people are born fearless in the kitchen, I was not one of those people.



Take it from me, if you are a fearful cook or baker, you can learn to be fearless. If I did, so can you!



KNOWLEDGE REALLY IS POWER!

Just as an artist has to understand how paint behaves under different conditions (with water, thicker, thinner, when spread with a knife versus a brush, etc), a baker needs to understand their medium. Understanding my medium has helped me to overcome my fears. But it didn't happen overnight!



Our media (mediums?) are our ingredients. The ingredients that are common to most kinds of traditional baking are fats, flour, sugar, eggs and leaveners.

FATS

Fats include butter, shortening, vegetable oils and animal fats (lard, bacon fat, etc).

Fats perform many important functions in baked goods.

- Fat carries flavor.
- Fat tenderizes and weakens gluten strands.
- Fat assists with browning.

Did you know that butter is not 100% fat? Most American butter is about 80% fat with the remainder being made up of milk solids and water.

Did you know that substituting a fat that is liquid at room temperature for a fat that is solid at room temperature will lead to moister baked goods? Now you do!

To learn more, click to read my posts on fat.

[Part One](#)

[Part Two](#)

[Part Three](#)

FLOUR

Flour provides the bulk in almost every sort of baked good. There are many types of flour, but there are many more types of baked goods than there are flour types. Knowing how to manipulate this crucial ingredient gives us the confidence to bake almost anything from crunchy cookies to light and rich brioche to angel food cake.

Did you know that the more protein in flour, the more liquid it can absorb?

Did you know that if you squeeze cake flour in your fist, it will smooch together into a ball, but if you squeeze bread flour in your fist, it doesn't smooch? (This is a good test if you forget to label your flour bins.)

To learn more about how to choose the right kind of flour,

[**CLICK HERE.**](#)

SUGAR

Sure, sugar makes things sweet, but sugar has so many more functions in baking.

- Sugar assists in browning.
- Sugar helps keep baked goods moist.
- Sugar tenderizes.
- Sugar enhances flavor.

Did you know that sugar is hygroscopic? That means that it loves water and draws water to itself. That's why your sugar can get all clumpy on humid days.

Did you know that you can substitute one cane sugar for another without anything awful happening? Brown sugar, dark brown sugar, organic sugar, demerara sugar, turbinado sugar, plain old granulated sugar: they're pretty much all interchangeable unless a slight molasses flavor (or the darker color) might not work with your final product.

Learn more about sugar by [CLICKING HERE](#).

EGGS

The marketing people really got it right when they called them “incredible edible eggs.” Egg yolks contain fats, emulsifiers and some protein, and the whites are comprised of water and protein.

Eggs are one of the most versatile ingredients on the planet.

Did you know that each pleat in a chef's toque is said to signify their mastery of that number of ways to cook an egg?

Did you know that Escoffier published 143 egg recipes in his Guide Culinaire? --Bon Appetit

The main difference between a pancake and a souffle is how you treat the eggs when adding them to the batter. Pretty cool, huh?

Shockingly, I haven't written a dedicated post about the awesomeness of eggs. I will do that in an upcoming [Fundamental Fridays](#) post and will let you know when it's up.

LEAVENERS

Leaveners are what make your baked goods rise. There are three basic kinds of leaveners.

- Mechanical leaveners
- Chemical leaveners
- Biological leaveners

Mechanical leavening is achieved through air expansion during baking and steam. The more air you can incorporate into the batter, the more the leavening, and the more quickly water turns to steam in the oven, the higher your baked goods will rise.

Chemical leaveners include baking soda and baking powder. Baking soda makes bubbles (that then are mechanical leaveners) when combined with an acid. Baking powder is just baking soda with the addition of an acid so it produces bubbles when it gets wet—no extra acid needed.

Biological Leaveners= Yeast, yeast baby.

NOW WHAT?

Now that you know a bit about your ingredients, the next step is to learn to manipulate them so that they give you the results you want. This means learning mixing methods.



MIXING METHODS

Click on the method to learn more.

- [The Creaming Method](#)
- [The Muffin Method](#)
- [The Two-Stage Method](#)
- [The Egg Foam Method](#)
- [The Biscuit Method](#)
- [My Very Own Mixing Method](#)

ABOVE ALL: *RELAX*

As with any other skill, with practice comes ease and confidence.

Relax and approach new tasks with wonder and a sense of adventure. Don't be afraid to [ask questions](#).

Understand your ingredients and learn the mixing methods. It will free you from having to read the instructions in a recipe. Once you read, “cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy,” you will know you are performing the creaming method and then you can just get to it.

Thank you again for allowing me to talk to you. I hope this short ebook helps you feel more confident, because a confident baker is a fearless baker!

Looking for other ways to stay in touch and be a part of the conversations in the PCO community? You can find us here:

<u>Facebook</u>	<u>Twitter</u>
<u>YouTube</u>	<u>Pinterest</u>

I'm looking forward to getting to know *you* better!

If you know anyone who would like to be Fearless in the Kitchen, I hope you will share this ebook with them. Maybe they will join us in the PCO Community as well!



Thank you for allowing me to serve you. If you have any questions, please find me through any of my social media channels or by [emailing me](#). I am happy to help!

--Fearlessly Yours,
Jenni

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