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A Fun Way to Baking for the Dummies

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Baking is the next big thing to sliced bread. Oh, the irony. I remember the times my family conveniently, used to avoid any sort of contact with me whenever I announced a baking feat. â€œIâ€™m baking bagels today, yâ€™all better be readyâ€• I didnâ€™t mean get ready to taste it. I meant it as a thre warning: prepare yourselves mentally and physically, because it will be a disaster and thereâ€™s no way of avoiding it. The end result was always hilarious. At times I used to take pity and let them eat something stomachable instead. But those days have certainly disappeared. Many women think that baking something as simple as a plain vanilla cake as an intimidating operation, that requires a truck load of skills, mastery and plenty of time and energy. I can account from my experience, that indeed, bakingâ€™s not easy. But once you learn the basics, itâ€™s as simple as cooking. Or reading?

To my ignorant readers, baking is not the same as cooking. Cooking can be an experiment that has high chances of succeeding when you know how to balance the taste. Baking unfortunately has steadfast rules and accurate measurements that have to be followed like an oath, till your grave. You can experiment with baking too, but chances are that youâ€™re experiment might well, fail. If in case you do get it right by some miracle or fluke, then note it down, donâ€™t just register it in your memory. Plenty of ways to forget that extremely good recipe and baking a flop cake in the end. Just because you got the proportions wrong. Now that Iâ€™ve agonized on all the troubles that Iâ€™ve gone through during my early baker woman days, I shall give you some important tips on baking that you must follow especially in a life death situation. Begin the drum roll.

First and foremost, before you start baking you need a well functioning oven, an apron and mittens. Make a list, go on. The second thing is a mixing bowl, measuring cups and spoons, spatulas a good egg beater and dough mixer. The last two items arenâ€™t necessary, but Iâ€™m warning you that hand-beating eggs is painful and takes a long time because you have to get that perfectly fluffy consistency. While you can mix batters for cakes and such by hand, kneading dough needs care. After kneading the dough a number of times, take a small piece, roll it in your hand and stretch it as much as you can. If the dough finally becomes a little see through, congratulations, you have a winner. If it breaks, repeat kneading. Again.

Flour, eggs, milk, butter, baking soda, baking powder and at least a pinch of powdered sugar and salt are required for baking most of the time. Make sure the ingredients are fresh and not past the expiry date. As I mentioned before, whipping eggs to the right consistency is the main step in baking. When you whip egg whites they should be airy and fluffy. To do this right make sure all the ingredients are at room temperature. The butter milk and eggs should be taken out of the fridge an hour before. Never use runny or slightly melted butter, because most recipes require butter creamed with icing sugar.

Before kneading the dough, always sieve the flour. I prefer sifting it along with the baking powder. This prevents the formation of lumps when youâ€™re either kneading it or adding it to the batter. The texture of the cake improves after sieving the flour.

Lastly, preheat the oven to the given temperature. Keep checking in between to see if the cake has risen. If you under or over beat the batter, the cake will not rise. Donâ€™t feel disappointed if your cake does not come out well, and itâ€™s your third time in the kitchen. You learn from your mistakes. This applies to baking as well. Itâ€™s all about trial and error.

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