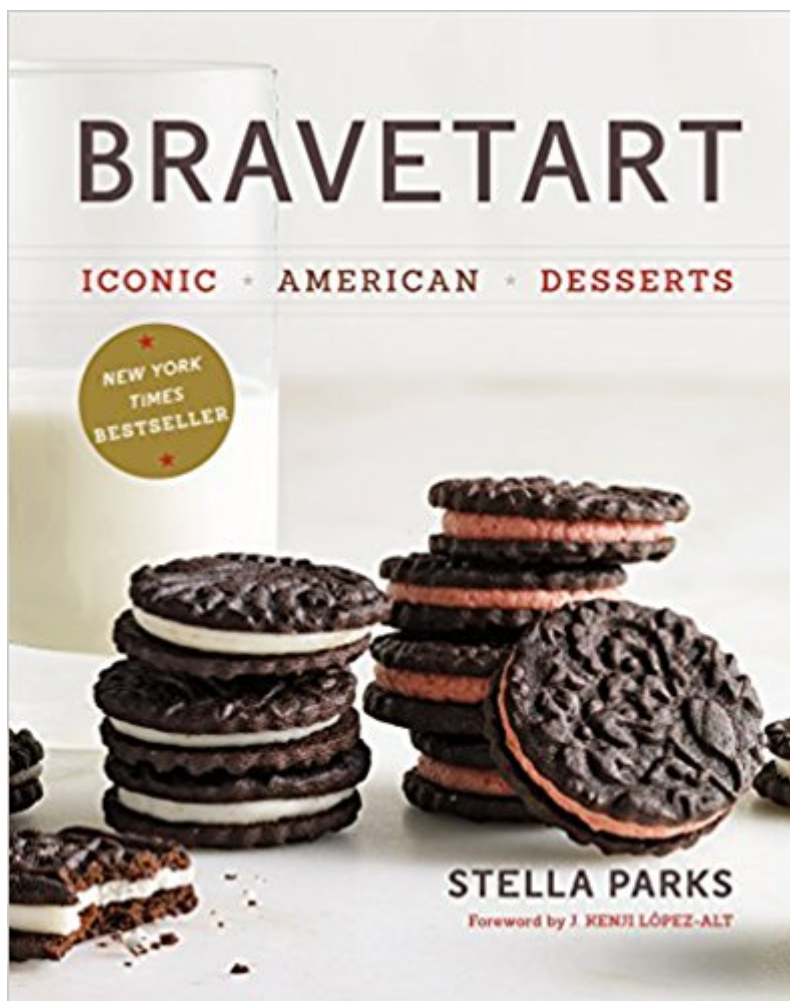


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BraveTart: Iconic American Desserts



Synopsis

From an award-winning pastry chef and a James Beard Award nominated writer for Serious Eats, foolproof recipes and a fresh take on the history of American desserts, from chocolate chip cookies to toaster pastries. From One-Bowl Devil's Food Layer Cake to a flawless Cherry Pie that's crisp even on the very bottom, *BraveTart* is a celebration of classic American desserts. Whether down-home delights like Blueberry Muffins and Glossy Fudge Brownies or supermarket mainstays such as Vanilla Wafers and Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Ice Cream, your favorites are all here. These meticulously tested recipes bring an award-winning pastry chef's expertise into your kitchen, along with advice on how to "mix it up" with over 200 customizable variations—in short, exactly what you'd expect from a cookbook penned by a senior editor at Serious Eats. Yet *BraveTart* is much more than a cookbook, as Stella Parks delves into the surprising stories of how our favorite desserts came to be, from chocolate chip cookies that predate the Tollhouse Inn to the prohibition-era origins of ice cream sodas and floats. With a foreword by The Food Lab's J. Kenji López-Alt, vintage advertisements for these historical desserts, and breathtaking photography from Penny De Los Santos, *BraveTart* is sure to become an American classic. 84 photographs

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Customer Reviews

"One of the most engaging baking books to be published in years. . . . Parks spent five long years developing her recipes, and the smart tricks sprinkled throughout the book show it was time well spent. . . . [There] is a lot to be said for being able to make the perfect version of whatever your

childhood guilty pleasure was—and a lot more to be said for one book that delivers them all. Parks adds a remarkable new voice to the world of baking books. Combine smarts with whimsy and you get delicious results.

—Jane Black, Washington Post

“As if it’s not impressive enough that Stella Parks whips up her own Twinkies and animal crackers, Snickers and sprinkles, she can also tell us who invented them, when, why and how.

—Food & Wine

“BraveTart is a total wow. And the same goes for Parks herself—a brilliant pastry chef who understands why certain desserts are so distinctly desirable and can translate that understanding into recipes that are thoroughly detailed, yet alluringly doable.

—Sybil Pratt, BookPage

“Parks uses [food science] to give people new tools to become better bakers, a better understanding of baking, and an emphatic reminder of why every one loved these cookies, cakes, and other sweets in the first place.

—Chris Crowley, GrubStreet

“Intelligent, engaging, inquiring, instructive, and joyous: as befits its subtitle, this is destined, deservedly, to become a truly iconic book.

—Nigella Lawson, chef and author of How to Be a Domestic Goddess and Simply Nigella

“I am convinced that Stella is the result of a biological accident where a lab technician dropped Betty Crocker, Ernie the Keebler Elf, Mr. Wizard, and Fannie Farmer’s DNA samples into an incubator and out emerged a living, breathing pastry goddess. A genetic experiment gone horribly, horribly right.

—from the Foreword by J. Kenji López-Alt, New York Times-bestselling author of The Food Lab

“With her excellent and adventurous palate, inventive mind, and phenomenal baking skills, Stella Parks gives the reader a smart no-nonsense education in baking with a good measure of attitude, loads of encouragement, and plenty of details to ensure success. Refreshing, fun, and inspiring for seasoned and beginning bakers alike.

—Alice Medrich, James Beard Award-winning author of Flavor Flours and Chewy Gooey Crispy Crunchy Melt-in-Your-Mouth Cookies

“BraveTart is the book that every baker needs in the kitchen. I am in love with Stella’s take on classic American pastry staples like the fluffy homemade white bread that begs to be turned into a PB&J or the flaky, tangy hand apple pies like the ones you can’t pass up at the McDonald’s drive-thru.

—Christina Tosi, chef, founder, and owner of Momofuku Milk Bar

“Reading Stella Parks’ BraveTart takes us to an extremely decadent, fun place—and beyond: our immersion in the quirky history of American baking is as satisfying and fascinating as these recipes are delicious and impeccably rendered!

—Matt and Ted Lee

“From the second I picked up BraveTart I had a childish grin from ear to ear and rightfully so. Stella Parks has managed to tap into everyone’s childhood with her clever, witty and scrumptious versions of iconic and nostalgic sweets of our youth. Don’t be fooled though, she is a no nonsense baker and

this book is chock full of lessons and demystifying baking tips, tricks and techniques. BraveTart is must have “ingredient” for bakers of all levels. - Johnny Iuzzini “Stella has given us all a gift in recreating these wonderful recipes. Every recipe will bring a smile to your face and make you want to bring your family together and recreate your childhood birthday parties or other special moments. Thank you Stella for reminding us these special iconic desserts are as much fun to make as they are to eat.” - Maura Kilpatrick, Pastry Chef and Owner of Sofra Bakery and Caf  , co-author of Soframiz “A cookbook that is as interesting to read as it is to cook from. . . . From elegant homespun desserts to homemade Wonder Bread, [BraveTart] offers a Cracker Jack blend (yes, there’s a recipe for that, too) of ingenuity and whimsy. - Publishers Weekly, starred review

Stella Parks is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and a James Beard Award nominated writer for Serious Eats. She was named one of America’s Best New Pastry Chefs by Food & Wine. When not at home in Lexington, Kentucky, Stella can be found at the Serious Eats test kitchen in Brooklyn, New York. J. Kenji Lopez-Alt is the managing culinary director of SeriousEats.com, author of the James Beard Award nominated column The Food Lab, and a columnist for Cooking Light. He lives in San Mateo with his wife Adriana.

I thought this was a cookie book because that’s what’s shown in the preview, and already have one I absolutely adore, so I didn’t think I needed this. Then I saw J. Kenji Lopez-Alt’s review, and I love his book, The Food Lab: Better Home Cooking Through Science, so I gave this a thumb through. Whoa! This is not another cookie book. It’s chock-full of all the iconic Americana treats that your inner child loves. It’s just plain fun. And she has some awfully clever hacks. The chapters are: * Classic American Desserts: 1. Cookies & Candy, 2. Cakes, 3. Pies, and 4. Doughnuts * Classic American Brands: 5. Cookies & Snacks, 6. Puddings, 7. Breakfast Treats, and 8. Candies & Candy Bars * Classic American Ice Cream: 9. Scoops & Fountain Specials Pictured below: 1) Homemade Oreos with Homemade Cream Filling p 212&215. Haha! They are spot on, and were a lot easier to make than I expected. Nice bonus for environmentalist friends will be thrilled that there’s no palm oil in sight. Here’s the embossed rolling pin, if you want yours to be fancy looking, too. PAISLEY rolling pin. Engraved rolling pin with paisley for embossed cookies. Embossing rolling pin. 2) Homemade Pop-Tarts p 274. Yum! They’re not supposed to be blue, but my little one

asked, and kids are cute, so I'll be asked to make them. These have to cool after you bake them, and the icing has to set for 12 hours after, so these need a little pre-planning. These are a little more effort-y than the Oreos, but they are beyond worth it. I was shocked by how much fruit is actually crammed in these. Niiice. I purchased sprinkles, but she has a recipe for those, too, if you're feeling it.

3) Peanut Butter Cups - p 299. Tempering the chocolate takes a little patience waiting for the chocolate to hit the exact temps, but these were easy and the kids were thrilled.

4) Red Wine Velvet Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting - p 130 & 132. *That* is an amazing cake! Outstanding flavor and not terribly sweet. There's no artificial coloring in it, just dark zinfandel and raw cocoa powder.

5) Double Vanilla Ice Cream with Cookie Dough Nuggets - p 334 with Cookie Dough Nuggets - p 346. I did the peanut butter chocolate chip cookie dough variation. Divine. The vanilla flavor is nice and strong and the ice cream's texture is perfectly creamy.

Some others I have flagged to try: Chocolate Covered S'mores - p 63 * Souffleed Cheesecake - p 80 * Buttermilk Biscuits with Strawberries and Cream - p 86 * Pineapple Cutout Cake - p 93 * Lemon Meringue Pie with Marshmallow Meringue - p 153 * Fried Cake Donettes - p 186 * Homemade Thin Mints - p 228 * Homemade Twinkies - p 244 * Homemade 3 Musketeers - p 304 * Homemade Snickers - p 308 * Homemade Cracker Jack - p 311

I'll update this as I play in the book more.

Being someone who cannot consume wheat (celiac) I bought this book because most of the recipes had a gluten free version, but I was a skeptic, I have been burned so many times where the gluten free versions did not live up to the promise or even a stones throw close to the gluten version. So this weekend I took the plunge and made the devils food cake. All along dreading the disappointment that would follow with the reveal of the finished product. I did not even have faith that the recipe could result in a 3 layer cake (it does) instead of 3 pancake layer cake. OMG!!! CAKE, glorious CAKE. Cake I never dreamed I would ever taste again. This was devils food cake that needed no excuse, no addendums, no apologies. NO 'gluten free' explanations. This was CAKE that EVERYONE loved and went back for seconds, thirds. It was declared the best devil foods cake they had tasted period!!!! No one missed the flour. YOU have got to try it for yourselves and ps don't scrimp on the good quality ingredients. You are worth it and so are all your loved ones. Can't wait to try another recipe. Which all the recipes had a gf version but hey just this one is worth the price of the book and I do not doubt that others will not be a disappointment either.

This cookbook is not for brand new cooks looking for easy recipes. Stella expects you to have a stand mixer, a scale, a thermometer, cookie cutters, a piping bag, and a variety of baking vessels. She expects you to have access to some unusual ingredients. Above all she expects you to follow recipes to the letter. IF you have those things and are willing to follow her lead, you will be rewarded with incredible food and recipes that work every single time. While none of her recipes are difficult, they do require precision. She explains why she chooses particular ingredients and techniques and gives many options for varying her recipes once you've mastered the basics. If you love familiar American comfort-food desserts, Stella's recipes will never lead you astray.

I've been following Stella for a few months and baking a few of her recipes that she's posted online at *Serious Eats* and her blog. And they are consistently excellent. I mean, restaurant quality, at home. I've produced cakes and pies and other baked goods that are as good as anything I've had from a high-end bakery. Guests are amazed, and frankly, I'm amazed ("I made that!"). I was very excited for this book, and it doesn't disappoint. It's equal parts history and cooking. The historical interludes that introduce each recipe are well-researched, complete with end notes citing to extensive sources. I've never read a cookbook that had a bibliography like this. For example, learning why a graham cracker is called a graham cracker (and why it could be considered a total diss on its namesake, Sylvester Graham), and then baking some delicious and far-better-than-retail graham crackers at home is just great fun. Even better, each recipe has a number of easy variations. Many, if not most, of the recipes also have gluten free versions. Stella deserves a lot of credit, I think, for going the route of celebrating our national heritage of uniquely American desserts and giving them the treatment that they deserve. Kudos. This will be my go-to baking book for the foreseeable future, and it should be yours too.

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