

BAKE & SPRINKLE



CHAHRAZAD AL HAJJAR

To Adam and Lana, I hope this book
inspires you to always follow your dreams.

To Sami, for believing in me.

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MY STORY

Welcome to my first baking cookbook!

I love baking, especially when my cakes taste as good as they look! My biggest joy is when I see people's reactions when they taste my desserts. In this book, I am sharing all of my tried and tested recipes with you so you can create beautiful memories in your kitchen.

With all the lifestyle changes we have witnessed over the past two years, baking has become a regular activity in so many people's lives. Families have been spending more time together than ever before and, as a result, more time in the kitchen creating and enjoying meals together.

First, let me tell you more about my baking journey. I have been baking for over nine years and sharing my creations with an audience from all over the world through my social media page "@chahrazadscuisine" on Instagram and more recently on TikTok and Youtube. I started my page "Chahrazad's Cuisine" in 2013. I was a new, full-time working mom. At the beginning, I shared the recipes I was making for my family on a daily basis. Then, I began to bake simple desserts, such as cookies for a bake sale at work or a two-layered chocolate cake for a barbecue night with friends. Later, I took a basic cake decorating class which taught me the basics of making American buttercream and piping. The real learning, though, happened in my small apartment kitchen in Dubai every single night after work and after my son went to sleep. There, I would bake, experiment, and, at many times, get frustrated. I learned everything through trial and error and with the support of many taste testers around me, including my husband, brothers, colleagues, and friends.

Throughout my baking journey, I have had several appearances and continue to regularly appear on local and regional food channels where I share delicious recipes and teach others how to enjoy their time in the kitchen. In 2020, I launched my own Sprinkles line, Pinkles. That same year, I also started giving online baking classes for the first time. I taught hundreds of baking enthusiasts from all over the world how to bake different desserts.

When I started my baking journey nine years ago, I never found a central source of information that provided all the recipes and basic skills required for a new baker. That is what encouraged me to write a book and share my knowledge so that bidding bakers can find a single source of all the information they need for baking success. Every single recipe in this book has been carefully crafted and includes clear measurements and detailed step-by-step instructions to make your baking journey as smooth and fun as possible.

Whether you want to just bake your husband's or child's next birthday cake, prepare a stunning dessert for your next family dinner party, or have foolproof recipes for your baking business, there are so many recipes for you in this book. I want you to succeed in your baking journey, to bake and impress, and, most importantly, to enjoy the whole process.

I hope you enjoy trying out these recipes as much as I enjoy baking them in my kitchen every day.

Happy baking!

—Chahrazad

BAKING ESSENTIALS

Baking and Cake Decorating Tools

Here are the tools you should invest in if you are planning on baking:

- **MIXER:** You can use either an electric mixer with a hand beater or a stand mixer. If you can invest in a stand mixer, it will make things much easier for you.
- **KITCHEN SCALE:** This tool is essential for successful baking and getting consistent results. I highly recommend investing in one. This book provides both metric and cup measurements. If you do have a kitchen scale, I suggest you follow the metric measurements provided in each recipe.
- **ROUND CAKE PANS:** Most of the cake recipes in this book can be made in any cake pan size. However, I would recommend following the cake pan size indicated in each recipe for best results. A good quality metal cake pan will contribute toward a great cake texture.
- **MEASURING SPOONS:** These are essential for measuring ingredients such as vanilla extract, salt, baking powder, and baking soda.
- **MIXING BOWLS:** In addition to the bowl of the stand mixer, you need at least one additional mixing bowl for measuring dry/wet ingredients separately.
- **FINE SIEVE:** This is essential for sifting your dry ingredients in several of these recipes.
- **rubber spatula:** This is used for scraping down the sides of the mixer bowl. It is useful when making macarons or buttercream.
- **SMALL SAUCEPAN:** This is required when making swiss meringue buttercream, caramel, or homemade custard.
- **PARCHMENT PAPER/ROUNDS:** Parchment paper should be used when baking cookies. For cakes, I usually use pre-cut parchment rounds.
- **COOKIE SHEETS:** Non-stick cookie sheets are usually a certain thickness that helps cookies maintain shape and not burn during baking.
- **ICE CREAM SCOOP:** This will be used to achieve a consistent shape and size when you are baking cookies.
- **ROLLING PIN:** This is required for rolling cookie or tart dough.
- **COOKIE CUTTERS:** These are useful when making cookie shapes for desserts like sugar cookies.
- **DIGITAL THERMOMETER:** To ensure food safety, this is required when making a meringue-based buttercream.
- **COOLING RACK:** This is important for cooling cake layers and cookies.

For decorating layered cakes, the following tools are essential:

- Bread Knife (for trimming cake tops)
- Cake Turntable
- Non-Slip Mat
- Cake Scraper/Smoothen
- Offset Spatula (small or large depending on preference)
- Piping Bags
- Piping Tips
- Acrylic Disc
- Tall Cake Scraper/Smoothen (I prefer using the metal ones)

CORE INGREDIENTS

Do you ever come home craving some cookies for yourself or your kids and then get frustrated that you do not have all the required ingredients? I always make sure to have the following ingredients in my pantry and fridge so that I can bake almost anything that comes to mind when a craving hits.

- All-Purpose Flour
- Self-Rising Flour
- Cake Flour
- Baking Soda
- Baking Powder
- Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- Salt
- Unsalted Butter
- Neutral Oil (I use Canola Oil)
- Vanilla Extract
- Eggs
- Whole Milk
- Whipping Cream
- Coffee
- Chocolate Chips
- Fine Sugar
- Powdered Sugar
- Almond Flour (for making macarons)
- White Vinegar (for wiping bowls in some recipes)
- Baking Spray
- Corn Syrup

OTHER INGREDIENTS

These ingredients are nice to have if you want to play around with flavors and for decorating desserts:

- Lemon Extract
- Almond Extract
- Cinnamon
- Sprinkles
- Gel Food Coloring
- Oil Based Coloring (for coloring chocolate)
- Edible Gold Luster Dust
- Gold Leaf

BAKING TIPS

Here are my top 10 tips for baking delicious and beautiful cake layers:

- **Use room temperature ingredients:** Milk, butter, and eggs should always be at room temperature when baking a cake. Unless specified otherwise in any of the recipes, always take them out of the fridge at least 1 hour before you want to start baking. However, when baking cookies, it is best to use cold eggs.
- **Grease your cake pans with baking spray, and line them with parchment rounds:** This will ensure the cakes come out easily when cooled, especially very moist cakes that tend to stick (such as the vanilla cake in this book).
- **Preheat the oven 30 minutes before preparing the cake batter:** Cake batter needs a hot oven in order to rise nicely.
- **Place the cake pans in the center of the oven:** If your oven is small, bake only two cake pans at a time.
- **Use a kitchen scale to split the cake batter evenly among the cake pans being used.**
- **Never open the oven in the first 20 minutes of baking.**
- **Always set a timer to the time called for in the recipe:** This will ensure you do not forget the cake you worked hard on preparing.
- **Let the cakes cool in the pans before inverting them onto a wire rack:** Resist the urge to remove the cakes while they are still hot.
- **Do not overmix the cake batter and do not overbake the cake:** Following these two tips will help you achieve fluffy and soft cake layers.
- **The cake is ready when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean or the cake starts to shrink around the edges of the pan.**



CONVERSION CHART

Volume		Weight		Temperature	
U.S.	Metric	U.S.	Metric	°F	°C
1 tsp.	5 mL	½ oz.	15 g	250	120
1 Tbsp.	15 mL	1 oz.	30 g	300	150
¼ cup	60 mL	3 oz.	90 g	325	160
½ cup	80 mL	4 oz.	115 g	350	180
¾ cup	125 mL	8 oz.	225 g	375	190
1 cup	160 mL	12 oz.	350 g	400	200
1 cup	180 mL	1 lb.	450 g	425	220
1 cup	250 mL	2¼ lb.	1 kg	450	230

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