

# Norwegian Baking



Nevada Berg

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THROUGH THE SEASONS



PRESTEL

Munich · London · New York



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**Some days you just need to bake.  
Whatever the occasion, whatever the sky.**

# Introduction



Baking provides a wide canopy of experiences. It can be simple and complex, beautiful and imperfect, time consuming and swift. It's creation by our hands, the marriage of ingredients, a thoughtful journey, a way of celebrating, a way of building on the relationships around us, a gesture of love. It's our past, our present, and our future—telling the stories of what has been, making memories in the moment, and creating something to be carried into tomorrow.

When thinking about what kind of cookbook would follow my first, *North Wild Kitchen: Home Cooking from the Heart of Norway*, I always knew deep down it would have to be about baking. The smells of butter melting and cardamom drifting in the air, bowls of custard cooling on the counter, seeds strewn across the plate, bubbles forming on flatbread over the hot griddle, flour everywhere—these are the commonplace moments found in my kitchen in Norway. The treats and delectable breads that bring so much joy, sustenance, and warmth throughout the year are just too good and too many not to give them the space they need to be shared and enjoyed.

My first baked good in Norway was a *skillingsbolle* (“cinnamon bun”). Swirls of dough laced with cinnamon sugar became a tradition I always indulged in whenever I visited my husband's family home of Bergen, where *skillingsboller* hail from. It was the beginning of a joyous journey filled with cakes, creams, breads, pastries, porridges, crackers, and everything in between. Each holiday, celebration, visit to a friend's home or local *bakeri*—“bakery”—opened my eyes to the wonders of Norwegian baking, with its deeply rooted traditions and newer influences. I've spent the last few years looking through cookbooks, old and new, their pages filled with exciting and interesting recipes. Some recipes are still popular today, some are forgotten, some are a bit more unusual, and some, perhaps, are better left as ink on the page. I've taken what I've gathered, along with my experiences and travels

around this breathtaking country and my own creations, to put together this collection of recipes for you. They tell so many stories and are often shaped by the unfolding seasons.

On paper, Norway has four seasons, but with the way the light moves in the north and the way nature follows, it feels more appropriate to refer to five seasons. Mirrored in the chapters, you'll find how we take our baking cues from the evolution of the seasons. After the winter solstice (the darkest time of the year), the start of the new year brings lighter days and yet still a lingering darkness. This is *vinterlys*—“winter light.” When snow still remains, but the days seem longer and buds, at long last, start popping, it's spring's *nytt lys*—“new light.” Summer is marked by the longest day of the year, as the *midnattssol*—“midnight sun”—shines bright. Where once the days were bright and long, the sky soon burns with a fire of red, purple, orange, and pink tones and the air turns both chilly and warm, like *ild og is*—“fire and ice.” And as autumn passes the baton to winter, the days grow shorter and dark. This is *mørketid*—the “dark time.”

Each season ushers in its own ingredients and occasions, carving out a path to help guide us in our kitchens. One thing you learn quickly when living in Norway, is that your home extends beyond its walls. Your time is shared both under a roof and in the open expanse of the surrounding landscape. Not even bad weather can, nor should, contain an individual to an enclosed space. That's why every opportunity to explore the outdoors is relished upon and why nature plays such an important role in the kitchen, whether you're anticipating new buds in spring, waiting for the berries to pop in summer, gathering a bounty of ingredients at harvest, or using preserves and spices in winter. Whatever the seasons bring, I hope you will allow them to guide you in creating your own baking story. I also hope you will feel the warmth of the Norwegian kitchen wherever you are.

# Notes on Equipment and Ingredients

Baking should make you feel empowered and allow for your creativity and intuition to shine. I would never wish for anyone to feel limited or helpless in the kitchen simply because they don't have specific equipment or ingredients. While necessary in some instances, they shouldn't deter you from the joy of making something you want to create. I have provided a list of equipment and ingredients that are good to have, but there are almost always substitutions you can use in place of them.

## EQUIPMENT

*Brush*—I like to use a designated hand broom/dust brush when cooking over the *takke*. It's a helpful tool to brush away any excess flour that might start burning on the dry griddle.

*Kransekake Rings*—These are available to buy in specialty shops and online and are used for making *kransekake*, an almond wreath cake. If you can't find the rings, you can always stencil the shapes by hand or make simple cookies with the dough.

*Krumkake Iron*—This highly embellished iron is used to make *krumkaker* and *strull*, "wafer cookies." Look for these at specialty shops and online.

*Lefse Stick*—This long and thin wooden stick is used for transferring *lelse* and flatbreads to the griddle and for turning them while cooking. It's a great tool to have if you plan on making *lelse* or flatbreads often. As an alternative, use the handle end of a long wooden spoon or spatula, or an unused wooden paint stirring stick.

*Ricer*—This tool is very helpful for getting a smooth consistency from the cooked potatoes used to make recipes like *lomper* and potato tarts. If you plan on baking Norwegian goods often, I highly recommend investing in one; otherwise, use a good potato masher.

*Rolling Pins*—In Norway, there are various types of indented rolling pins to make *lelse* and flatbreads. You can use a regular rolling pin for all of these recipes.

*Scale*—I include both imperial and metric measurements, but I highly recommend weighing

ingredients with a scale, as it is much more accurate. In some instances, the conversions are rounded slightly up or down to match more closely with the other and make it easier for you, independent of which measurement system you use. These slight differences should not affect the outcome of the recipes.

*Stand Mixer*—This is a true friend in the kitchen, as a good one will save you effort and time. So many people have stand mixers these days that many of the recipes call for using one. However, you can always use your hands to knead, or opt for electric beaters, a hand whisk, or a wooden spoon for mixing.

*Takke*—I adore my *takke*. This Norwegian griddle is round, very large, and can be electric or heated by fire. If you can't access one, use a frying pan instead. You won't be able to cook as many cakes or breads at once, or make them as large, but they'll turn out great, nonetheless.

*Waffle Iron*—The Norwegian waffle iron is imprinted with a heart design, giving waffles that distinctive look. However, you can always use a normal waffle iron.

## INGREDIENTS

*Butter*—Common Norwegian butter tends to be lightly salted and I use this butter in all my baking and cooking. Room temperature butter should be soft and malleable but keep its shape.

*Brown Cheese (Brunost)*—This iconic Norwegian cheese is actually a by-product of cheesemaking, when leftover whey is cooked down until it caramelizes and turns a lovely deep brown color. Look for the international brand, Ski Queen® Classic, which can be found in specialty shops and online.

*Cultured Milk*—I use *kulturmilk* and *kefir*, two soured milk products, in both cheese making and baking. For the recipes in this book when I normally use *kulturmilk*, I have listed buttermilk in the ingredient list. For the recipes using *kefir*, it's also fine to substitute buttermilk.

*Dairy*—Norwegian dairy products contain high percentages of fat. All cream must be heavy cream and contain about 36 percent fat. I specify which recipes require full-fat dairy products; elsewhere you can use lower fat products.

*Eggs*—I use locally sourced eggs and always leave them at room temperature, unless it's really hot and then I put them in the fridge and take out what I need an hour or so before use. Use room temperature eggs for these recipes. Also, many recipes call for either yolks or whites. I store leftover whites in the refrigerator to use within three days; they are great for making meringue. Leftover yolks tend not to store as well, so I prefer using them as soon as possible in custards or other recipes.

*Flour*—Some recipes call for strong white bread flour, which is the same as bread flour, strong white flour, and strong flour and has a higher protein content than all-purpose. If you don't have strong white bread flour, substitute with all-purpose flour, also known as plain flour. Some recipes call for whole flours, such as whole wheat or whole rye, where the whole kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm—are ground into a fine flour, making a coarser and more nutritious product. For rye flour, I sometimes use light rye flour (also known as white rye flour). For spelt flour, I sometimes use white spelt flour. For einkorn and emmer, I use fine stone-ground flours. Again, for more accuracy, I highly recommend using a scale to weigh flour.

*Fruits and Berries*—Many of the fruits and berries we use are grown in our garden or picked in the wild. Here are substitutions for those that might be harder to access:

- Bilberries (European blueberries)—blueberries
- Black currants—blackberries (although, they do have different taste profiles)

- Cloudberries—golden raspberries or even red raspberries for an alternative
- Lingonberries—cranberries
- Wild strawberries—strawberries

*Lukewarm Water/Milk*—When referring to lukewarm water or milk, it should be the same as body temperature, which is 98.6°F (37°C).

*Oil*—I use good quality rapeseed oil (also known as canola oil) in most of my cooking and baking. In all the recipes calling for oil, I suggest using a mild-flavored oil like canola oil or a mild olive oil.

*Salt*—I mostly use table salt, but I also occasionally use sea salt for finishing.

*Spices*—A potent spice will bring so much life to a recipe. As spices have a short shelf life, keep smaller amounts on hand and update as needed.

*Sugar*—I always use granulated sugar unless specified in the recipe. Some recipes call for pearl sugar, which is a more coarse, decorative sugar that keeps its shape when baking. Look for Scandinavian varieties.

*Syrup*—In Norway, there are two kinds of syrup, light and dark. Both are types of inverted sugar syrups. The closest substitute for light syrup is golden syrup, which you should be able to find in specialty shops. For dark syrup, substitute with light molasses.

*Vanilla*—For certain recipes, I prefer to use vanilla beans, but a high-quality pure vanilla extract—not essence—is a good substitute.

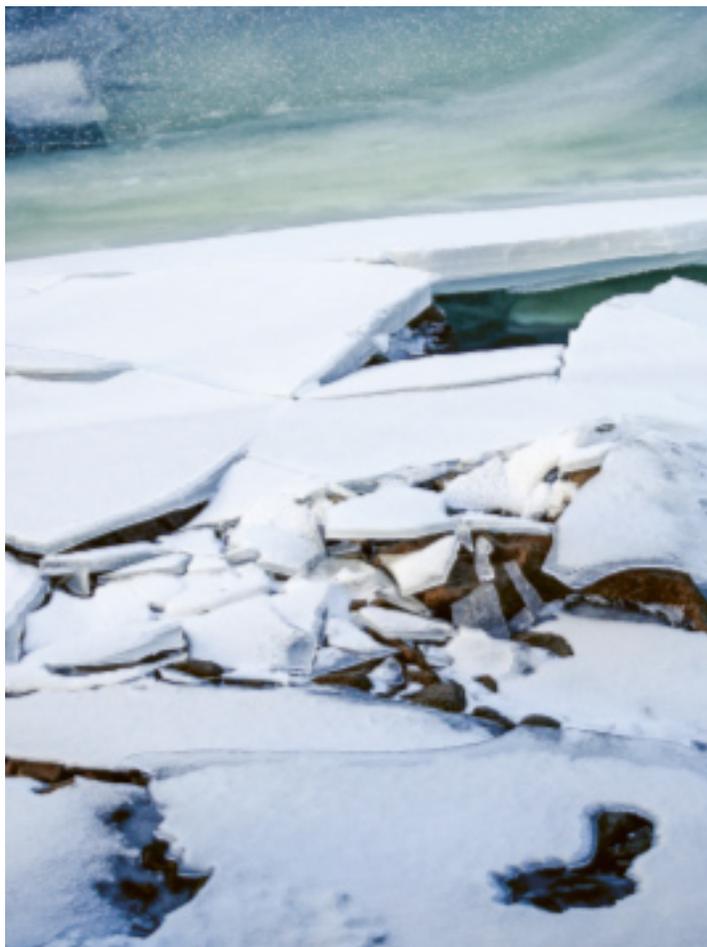
*Yeast*—Fresh yeast is readily available and typically used in Norwegian baking, however, to make it easier, my recipes use instant yeast. It does not require activation, making it a good alternative in baking. If using fresh yeast, make sure to dissolve it in the liquid before adding it to the recipe. I do use active dry yeast when making pizza dough, as I am used to preparing it in this manner, but it does require activation.



# Winter Light



Vinterlys





❖ **DARKNESS HAS BEGUN** its slow retreat here in the North, as the new year arrives off the heels of the darkest day of the year, the winter solstice. The days are short but regaining strength with each new morning. This is the time when winter shows its other side—a balance to the dark—the light.

The sky is a frosted blue or heavy grey, which at times breaks into strokes of pastels and vibrant hues as the sun rises and sets. The earth is laden with snow and the cold can be bitter, but the sun's rays provide glimmers of warmth on icy cheeks. Time is spent baking more wholesome breads and flatbreads following the treat-laden holiday times of *mørketid*. It's a fresh start, a chance to warm the kitchen and the soul at the same time.

February brings *Fastelavn* (Carnival) celebrations, with indulgent treats like cream-filled buns. As March enters, we nestle ourselves in the mountains for as many ski runs as we can fit in and time spent warming ourselves by the fire with a baked good in one hand and a warm drink in the other. It's a time to fill our bellies with good things as we look forward to the coming of spring.



# Sun Buns

In parts of northern Norway, to mark the return of the sun after the dark time (*mørketiden*), these *solboller*, or “sun buns,” also known as *solskinsboller*, or “sunshine buns,” are often enjoyed. Egg custard with its yellow hue sits front and center surrounded by sweet dough as a palpable symbol of the sun. Some variations sit the custard atop a plain bun, while others, including mine, place it on a cinnamon bun. It’s a very sweet way of welcoming in the lighter days.

## Makes 12 buns

### ❖ FOR THE BUNS

- 1¼ cups (300 ml) whole milk
- 4 cups plus 2 tablespoons (500 g) all-purpose flour, sifted
- 6 tablespoons (75 g) granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons (¼ ounce / 7 g) instant yeast
- 1½ teaspoons ground cardamom
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ⅓ cup (75 g) lightly salted butter, cut into small pieces

### ❖ FOR THE FILLING

- 4 tablespoons (56 g) lightly salted butter, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

### ❖ FOR THE CUSTARD

- 2 large egg yolks, at room temperature
- ⅓ cup (65) granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 cups (480 ml) whole milk
- ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise, or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the buns, in a small saucepan, heat the milk over low heat until lukewarm.

In a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook attachment, combine the flour, sugar, yeast, cardamom, and salt. Add the lukewarm milk and 1 of the eggs. Knead on low for 8 minutes. Add the butter and knead on medium for about 5 minutes more, or until the dough is very elastic and somewhat moist. Transfer the dough to a lightly buttered bowl, cover with a tea towel, and let rise in a warm spot for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

For the filling, in a small bowl, combine the butter, sugar, and cinnamon.

Once the dough has doubled in size, line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

On a lightly floured surface, using a rolling pin and more flour as needed to prevent sticking, roll out the dough into a large rectangle that measures roughly 20 x 15 inches (50 x 38 cm). Spread the filling evenly across the dough all the way to the edges. Starting on 1 of the long sides, roll the dough around the filling to form a long, roughly 20 inch (50 cm), log. Using a sharp knife, cut the log crosswise into 12 equal size buns. Divide the buns between the prepared baking sheets, cover with a tea towel, and let rise in a warm spot for 40 minutes.

For the custard, in a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar then whisk in the cornstarch.

Put the milk in a small saucepan. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean into the milk and add the scraped bean (or add the vanilla extract). Place over low heat and warm until just about to simmer. Remove the vanilla bean, then gradually pour the warm milk in a slow, steady stream into the egg yolk and sugar mixture, whisking constantly to avoid curdling the eggs. →

Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and cook over medium heat for 5 to 8 minutes, or until the custard has thickened considerably. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

Using your fingers or the back of spoon, make a large indentation in the center of each bun, then fill with 2 to 3 tablespoons of the prepared custard.

In a small bowl, whisk the remaining egg and lightly brush it on top of the dough. Bake for about 10 minutes, or until nicely browned. Transfer to a wire rack to cool before serving. Store at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 2 days.



# No-Knead Emmer and Spelt Bread

A good, hearty loaf that can stand up to its toppings and leave you satisfied is always welcome in our house. That's what I like about this emmer and spelt bread. It's also nutritious and you can mix everything together the night before and bake it in the morning to enjoy for a late breakfast or lunch. Emmer, like einkorn, is an ancient heirloom grain, considered one of the earliest forms of cultivated grains, and is grown organically in Norway. It's high in protein and low in gluten with lovely nutty notes. I like to combine it with spelt flour for a lighter loaf, as it can be quite dense on its own. This recipe yields one large loaf, but you can always double it and freeze a loaf for later. Serve with your favorite toppings.

## Makes 1 loaf

4 cups plus 2 tablespoons (500 g)  
white spelt flour  
1½ cups plus 2 tablespoons (195 g)  
stone-ground emmer flour  
1½ teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon (⅛ ounce/3.5 g) instant  
yeast  
5 tablespoons (50 g) flax seeds  
5 tablespoons (50 g) sesame seeds  
2½ cups (600 ml) cold water

In a large bowl, whisk together the spelt flour, emmer flour, salt, yeast, flax seeds, and sesame seeds. Pour in the cold water and stir to form a dough. Cover with a tea towel and let rise in a warm spot overnight (12 to 18 hours).

Butter a 9x5 inch (23x13 cm) loaf pan.

After 12 to 18 hours, on a lightly floured surface, knead the dough 3 to 4 times, then shape into a rectangle and place in the prepared loaf pan. Cover with a tea towel and let rise in a warm spot for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Once the dough has doubled in size, preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C).

Take a second loaf pan, the same size as the first, and arrange it, upside down, on top of the filled loaf pan to create a tent and cover the dough. This will help create steam while the bread is baking, giving it a nice crust. Alternatively, you can tent foil over the top, leaving enough space for the dough to rise while baking without touching the foil. Bake for 40 minutes, then remove the loaf pan or foil on top and bake for about 20 minutes more, or until golden brown.

Let the bread rest in the loaf pan for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Store at room temperature in an airtight bag for up to 2 days.





# Rustic Einkorn and Herb Bread

Einkorn is an ancient grain that now has a permanent place in my household. It's typically richer in antioxidants and beta carotene than modern wheat varieties and has a complex taste. In this recipe, herbs balance the einkorn flour and you get a remarkable and tasty bread with a distinct and flavorful aroma that is a welcome change from everyday loaves. You can use fresh herbs or dried, as I have here—we preserve them from the garden. If using fresh, just double the amounts. Any leftover bread can be put to good use as croutons or in savory bread puddings for brunch.

## Makes 1 loaf

4 cups plus 2 tablespoons (500 g)  
stone-ground einkorn flour  
1 teaspoon (⅛ ounce/3.5 g)  
instant yeast  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons dried parsley  
2 teaspoons dried thyme  
1 teaspoon dried rosemary, dill,  
or chives  
1½ cups (360 ml) warm water

In a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook attachment, combine the flour, yeast, salt, parsley, thyme, and rosemary. Pour in the warm water and knead on medium for about 5 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and workable. Transfer to an oiled bowl, cover with a tea towel, and let rise in a warm spot for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size. I find that in colder months, I need to let the dough rise for up to 2 hours.

Once the dough has doubled in size, preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Place a cast-iron pan on a bottom rack of the oven, beneath the middle rack where the bread will bake. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

On a lightly floured surface, gently knead the dough, while folding over the edges to bring it together and form an oval shape. Place the dough on the prepared baking sheet and dust the top with some flour. Use a sharp knife to make a long and shallow cut in the center of the top of the dough, then cover with a tea towel while the oven is heating.

When the oven is ready, place the bread on the middle shelf of the oven. Carefully and quickly, pour 1 cup (240 ml) of warm water in the cast-iron pan and immediately close the oven door to create steam for a nice crust. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until golden brown.

Let the bread cool for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack and let cool for 1 hour before cutting into it. Store at room temperature in an airtight bag for up to 2 days.

# Einkorn and Honey Rolls

If you're new to using einkorn flour, this is a wonderful starter recipe. I really enjoy the nutty and toasty notes from the einkorn, and the addition of honey gives it a slightly sweet taste. You can also use this recipe to make a small loaf by placing the dough in a loaf pan for the second rise and baking for 35 minutes. Serve with your favorite toppings.

## Makes 8 rolls

3 cups (360 g) stone-ground einkorn flour  
1 teaspoon (1/8 ounce/3.5 g) instant yeast  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons runny honey  
1 cup plus 2 teaspoons (250 ml) warm water  
1/2 tablespoon mild-flavored oil

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook attachment, combine the flour, yeast, and salt.

Stir the honey into the warm water to combine, then pour into the stand mixer, followed by the oil, and knead on low for about 5 minutes, or until the dough is somewhat wet and sticky. Transfer the dough to a lightly oiled bowl, cover with a tea towel, and let rise in a warm spot for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Once the dough has doubled in size, line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Divide the dough into 8 equal pieces and shape into balls. Place the balls of dough on the prepared baking sheet, cover with a tea towel, and let rise in a warm spot for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). If desired, use a sharp knife to make shallow cuts in a cross design on the tops of the balls of dough. Bake for about 20 minutes, or until golden.

Let the rolls cool slightly before serving. Store at room temperature in an airtight bag for up to 2 days.





