

Piper



There's something a little sinister about eating a Dutch baby. I know Dutch people, and I know their babies, and therefore I feel a little funny announcing, "Hot Dutch babies! Ready to eat! Grab a fork so you can eat your Dutch babies!" Therefore, in an effort to promote world peace, I will henceforth refer to this dish only by its proper Germanic name: Apfelpfannkuchen.

This particular Apfelpfannkuchen recipe comes from *The Grand Central Baking Book*, a book I am excited to share with you for a number of reasons. Reason #1: I met the co-authors, Piper Davis and Ellen Jackson, at a culinary conference in New Orleans a few years ago (remember [this](#), longtime readers?). They are from Portland, and if you've ever been to Portland you know that everyone who lives there is incredibly nice. (Must be the beer.) Reason #2: Piper is co-owner and cuisine director of [Grand Central Baking Company](#), a wonderful business with outposts throughout Portland and Seattle, founded by her mother. Reason #3: Piper was kind enough to offer an early morning tour to registrants at the recent gathering of the International Association of Culinary Professionals, which was held in Portland last month. #4: When I went to sign up for this early morning bakery tour, it was already sold out. Reason #5: I was pissed. Reason #6: Because I really wanted a tour of the bakery. #7: Because I'd already met Piper. #8: And I like bakeries. #9: So, in collusion with my dear friend [Jill O'Connor](#), we contacted Piper separately, and she offered us and our closest friends and colleagues a separate, private tour of Grand Central Baking Company, the day *before* the official tour. Ha! Take that, all you early signer-uppers! Our tour was better! Did you get hand-pies on your tour, because we got them on ours! And they were flaky!

Anyway, even before all this Piperlove, I'd already gotten a copy of the book. Here it is, along with a snap I took of Piper during our special, private, better-than-the-other tour.



I can't say enough good things about this book, but I would like to emphasize this: it's not fancypants. It's a book that's perfect for a baking enthusiast who wants straightforward sweets and savories that won't take all day to make. There's pizza in there, cookies galore, sticky buns, and an excellent banana bread recipe. The 8-ingredient Jammers are buttermilk pastries that you shove your thumb into and fill with, well, jam. Yes, there's some more complicated stuff, if you roll that way, like some layer cakes and puff pastry. But it's a teaching book as much as a recipe book, and the step-by-step recipe photos will help keep you grounded as flour flies everywhere and you end up making a royal mess.

My favorite recipe so far is the super-simple, unbelievably low-tech Apfelpfannkuchen. Except that it's called a Dutch Baby in the book, which I find incredibly inappropriate.

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Recipe for Dutch Baby

Adapted from *The Grand Central Baking Book* by Piper Davis and Ellen Jackson (Ten Speed Press, 2009)

I love this recipe for its simplicity. You make a batter, pour it into a cast iron skillet, and bake it until it's puffed and golden on the outside, but still soft and tender inside. I think of it as a cross between a crepe, a popover, and a soufflé. Expect it to "fall" a few minutes after pulling it from the oven; it's supposed to.

Serves 3 to 4

4 eggs
1 cup milk
1 cup flour
1/2 teaspoon salt

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

Fresh lemon juice and powdered sugar, for serving, or maple syrup

Place a 10-inch cast iron skillet into the center of a cold oven. Make sure there's no rack above it. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Combine the eggs, milk, flour, and salt in a blender, or in a pitcher. (I use a large pitcher and an immersion blender.) Blend until smooth. You can also use a food processor.

When the oven has reached the proper temperature, carefully add the butter to the skillet and shut the oven door. Watch, and when the butter has melted, pour in the batter. Shut the door again and do not open it, I'm serious, until the end of cooking time, which can be anywhere from 25 to 35 minutes. You'll know it's done when the Dutch baby has risen, puffed considerably, and turned a deep golden brown.

(I like mine cooked a little longer than most, so I leave mine in for the full 35 minutes.)

Remove from the oven, cut into wedges, and serve with generous squeezes of lemon juice and a snowy shower of powdered sugar. (You may also serve it with maple syrup, but that strikes me as somewhat unoriginal.)