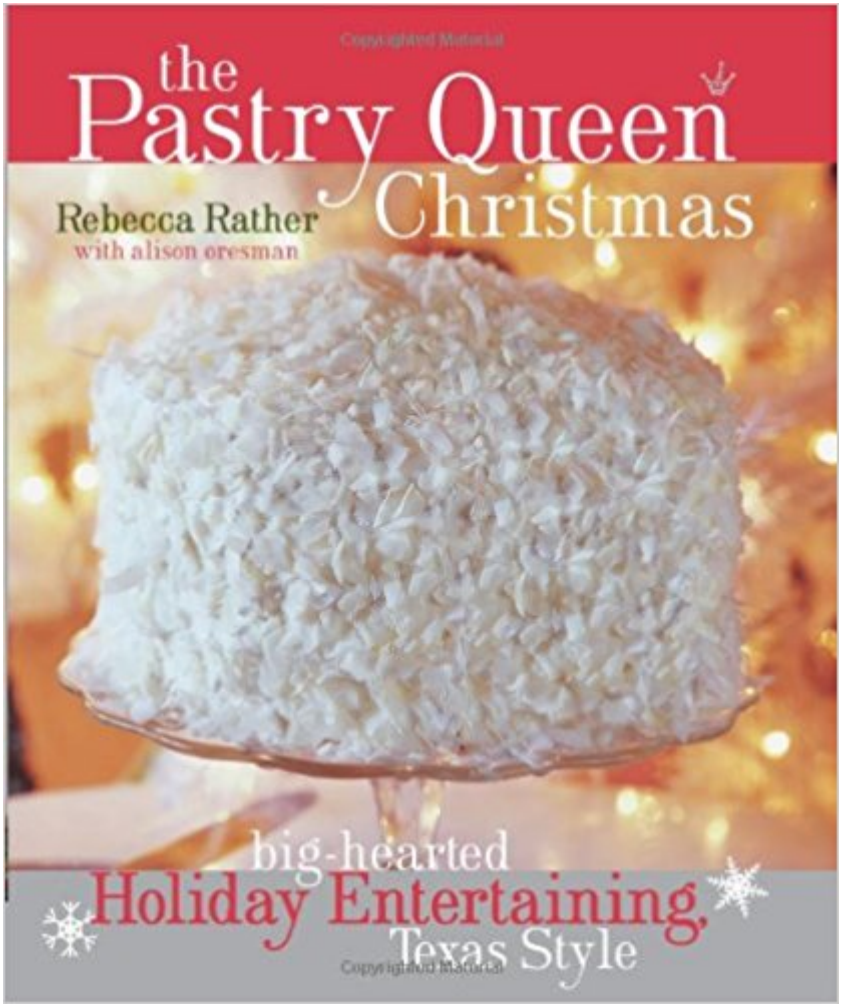
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The Pastry Queen Christmas: Big-hearted Holiday Entertaining, Texas Style



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Synopsis

It’s Christmastime at the Best Little Bakery in Texas The annual Fredericksburg Christmas parade marks the beginning of the Texas Hill Country’s holiday season, which means the Pastry Queen is kicking into high gear at her Rather Sweet Bakery and CafÃƒÂ©. As party invitations pile up in the mailbox, Rebecca Rather is up to her elbows in sticky meringue, creamy chocolate, and a sleigh full of savory treats to meet the entertaining needs of her neighbors. In The Pastry Queen Christmas, Rebecca shares nearly 100 traditional recipes reflecting her made-with-love-from-scratch philosophy and the tastes of small-town Texas. Show-off desserts such as Chocolate Cookie Crusted Eggnog Cheesecake, Sticky Toffee Pudding with Brandy Butterscotch Sauce, and Warm Pear Ginger Upside-Down Cake with Amaretto Whipped Cream are the perfect toppers to a family-style feast of Texas Spice-Rubbed Roast Pork, Baked Apple Pear Chutney, Brown Sugar Bacon, and No-Peeking Popovers. Still hungry the next morning? No problem-this country girl does an impressive breakfast, too: Bite-Sized Sticky Buns, Sweet Potato Scones, Cast-Iron Skillet Potatoes, and Mexican Ranch Chilaquiles ought to fill you up. And if you’re still looking for excuses to entertain this season, you’ll find ooey-gooey baked goods wrapped up as gifts, homemade craft and dÃƒÂ©cor ideas to make your home sparkle, and holiday-worthy menus guaranteed to make your gathering a Texas-sized success. Tree-trimming, cookie decorating, and Santas running down Main Street . . . Christmastime is here.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Though Rather's known as the Pastry Queen, the author and baker-owner of the Rather Sweet Bakery and CafÃƒÂ© in Fredericksburg, Tex., covers a lot more than baked goods in this comprehensive collection of holiday recipes from her native state. Organized by event (holiday open house, brunch, Christmas Eve, etc.), Rather offers an array of ideas sure to keep table legs groaning and belts loosening. Red velvet cupcakes get a jolt of sour sweetness from mascarpone cream cheese icing, and a delicious Wild Mushroom and Goat Cheese Quesadilla is topped with a colorful pecan and cranberry salsa laced with orange zest, balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard and jalapeno. Decadent Creamy Chicken Lasagna, Oysters Rockefeller Soup and Chocolate Cookie-Crusted Eggnog Cheesecake each guarantee a memorable event, and Rather's Texas roots shine through in a duo of holiday martinis featuring prickly pear syrup, tamales with a tomatillo sauce and a corn bread dressing (Mother's Best) so loaded with flavor that diners will forget any other kind exists. Helpful advice on advance preparations and clever variations abound; rounded out with packaging ideas for edible gifts and complete instructions on baking, assembling and decorating a gingerbread house (complete with templates), this is sure to become a holiday favorite. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Winner of 2008 IACP Cookbook Award: American category"[This] adds up to big fun in the kitchen. Rather neatly balances unpretentious style with some adventurous flavor combinations . . . Let your sweet tooth be your guide."-Baltimore Sun"The Pastry Queen Christmas is such a calling card for Fredericksburg that it ought to be required material for the town's real estate agents. Ms. Rather's stories about the residents are so engaging, the photography is so luscious, you'll feel you know the town when you're done. But the recipes, straightforward and accessible, are the reason to buy . . . Ms. Rather has updated and elevated classics just enough to be enticing but not unreachable."-Dallas Morning News"This feel-good cookbook is full of irresistible menus and recipes to help you build family traditions and make you the most talked-about party thrower in your circle. Rebecca Rather shows you how to do Christmas proud."-Gale Gand, author of Chocolate and Vanilla"Rebecca Rather is not my daughter, but with amazing food like this, we'd claim her as our own any day!"-Dan Rather, former anchor of the CBS Evening News"Rather Sweet Bakery is one of the most enchanted places in the Texas Hill Country; every confection oozes Rebecca Rather's love of excess. It makes sense that in her glorious second book Rebecca would apply her characteristic warmth and Texas-style flair to the holidays."-Paula Disbrowe, author of Cowgirl Cuisine"Rebecca Rather loves to bake and cook, and she does so, and writes about it, superbly. THE PASTRY QUEEN CHRISTMAS is a classic of great food, spectacular sweets, and truly

heartfelt reminiscences of family and friends, all served up with a big dose of Texas holiday spirit."-Nick Malgieri, author of How to Bake and A Baker's Tour

An attractive book, but as I have experienced with other Rebecca Rather books, the instructions are incomplete. The Caramel Meringue Pie looked beautiful and intriguing and was the impetus for my purchase of the book. I am an experienced pie baker, unafraid to tackle any recipe. So I dug in with much anticipation. A dozen eggs and 6 cups of sugar later, I am throwing away a runny mess. The instructions simply said to heat the milk and egg yolk mixture (without letting it boil) and pour it into the carmelized sugar. The obvious question is, to what temperature should the milk mixture be heated? It doesn't say. So when the sugar was carmelized and the milk was hot (without boiling!!), I poured them together as instructed. At this point, the instruction didn't say whether to keep the mixture on the heat while adding butter and marshmellows or to turn it off. I kept turning it on and off to get the marshmellows to melt. Of course, what should have been stated is that for the custard to set, the egg yolks have to reach at least 160 degrees (something I later learned by researching Rose Levy's information). If the eggs don't reach that temperature, the filling won't set. I can now vouch for that!Also, the timing in many of Ms. Rather's recipes are off. In this same recipe, it said it would take about 20-25 minutes to carmelize the sugar. If you heat it that long, you will have black sugar. It takes about half that time. Also, the recipe says bake the crust 10 minutes. This has to be a typo. No pie crust could possibly bake (particularly one lined with parchment and filled with pie weights) in 10 minutes. I baked it 30, then removed the weights and baked another 12 until it was golden.Also, the recipe says use half the pie crust dough (so why not give a recipe for half the amount so you aren't stuck with pie crust you may not use). Anyway, if you use a true 10" deep dish, you'll need about 2/3 of the dough.Finally, it simply says cool the filling and pour into the crust. Do you cool it completely until it's nearly set (which I would still be waiting for) or does it just have to cool down reasonably? Perhaps if my filling were going to set, it may have been obvious. A clearer desscription in the recipe would have been very helpful.Another reviewer had said this recipe is too sweet. I agree. Even if it had set, a person would not be able to finish a piece of it. The meringue is too much (3 cups of sugar and piled too high), the filling is very sweet and the crust is even sweet. I am wondering if this really is Aunt Mary's recipe. Perhaps Aunt Mary kept secrets of her own.I did make the bacon-wrapped green beans. They were very good. My family really enjoyed them.I also made the apple-pear chutney. Again, some details would be helpful. For example, I would use bosc pears. They are a bit firmer and probably wouldn't get as mushy as the chutney did with the pears I used. Also, it was pretty sweet, so the next time I will cut down on the sugars. The recipe said if you

put the chutney in apples, bake them for 30-45 minutes. I did put it in apples, but you don’t want to leave them that long in the oven. About 25 minutes tops.I intend to try more of the recipes. If you do as well, be prepared to try them a couple of times until you can figure out the missing information.

Can’t say enough good things about Rebecca Rather...EVERY SINGLE recipe of hers that I have tried (from ALL of her cookbooks) a winner hands-down. These are the recipes you will use again & again, & that friends will ask you for copies again & again! She doesn’t know it but she saved my life several times when I took over my son’s cafe in Springfield when he was ill. From her cakes, to the cookies (love those pink pigs), bunches of biscotti, to the ultimate pot pies & Tuxedo cake...I owe her.Don’t hesitate...buy ALL of her books and use them & give them to your favorite people.

I like this "rather" unique Christmas resource because: it has excellent recipes which are organized by the varying holiday events (Eve, Day, open house, brunch, tree trimming, NY) and it has wide variety of recipes for appetizer, salad, soup, desserts, etc. and not least, it features great color photos with fun-to-read text and it has some great shots of a Great Pyrenees named Beau (I’m a former owner of 2 and love this Gentle Giant breed)Rather won me over in her first cookbook as being a passionate baker who ventured out into other foods in her biz and offered some in this first offering. She and her community have a great time at the Christmas Holidays and so she shares some of her favorites as well as some that others offered her, as well as some other’s she invited to contribute, such as LBJ’s former chef.The excitement and passion she has (even as a busy chef) for these Holidays exhibits themselves in this fine array of recipes, illustrated by these examples: Warm Pear Ginger Upside Down Cake with Amaretto Whipped Cream; Creamy Chicken Lasagna; Wild Mushroom and Goat Cheese Quesadillas with Cranberry-Pecan Salsa; Glazed Chocolate Pave; Chocolate Cookie Crusted Eggnog Cheesecake; Texas Spice Rubbed Roast Pork.These are not overfully difficult recipes with either ingredients or techniques, but will certainly test the uninitiated baker or cook. They definitely are delicious and creative and will bring smiles as gifts and servings at this festive time of the year.Maybe she will do her third on Easter?

Some great and interesting recipes here!

Can Rebecca Rather write a bad cookbook? Never! This book is geared toward Christmas, but I use the recipes all year long. When I want to bake, my first books to choose from my library are Rebecca’s books. I can always find something that tweaks my interest. The Christmas book is like

her first in the way that I have the ingredients in my pantry. The photos are great and the stories about herself, her daughter, employees and customers make me feel as if I know her on a personal basis. Now I can't wait for her next book on entertaining to be published. It should be available in October and I'm counting the days until I receive my copy.

Just read through this cookbook and can't wait to try some of the recipes. Will update after I've made a few of them.

Well, cheers to the diversity of tastes. I see that there are very mixed reviews. As for my review, I love this book just as I loved the first. While the dessert recipes were spectacular in the earlier book, I actually regretted not seeing more savory dishes. There are definitely more this time around which is actually appealing to me. There's a great mix of holiday recipes, both sweet and savory...not to mention the recipe for that beautiful cake on the cover.At the holidays in particular, I only want to present an interesting twist on the holiday standards. It's important to me that the dishes on the table, while a little different, still feel and taste like home. I think that this book accomplishes that beautifully.Yet again, Rather has put her unique spin on the familiar. It doesn't hurt that it is also great to read and visually appealing. It's a nice coffetable book (if you can pry it out of the kitchen).

Rebecca Rather never disappoints--all recipes that I have tried are beyond fabulous.

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