

Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing

Edited by Lois Winston

Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing
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Introduction

A friend who's an avid reader told me recently that she chooses all her books from the bestseller lists. I don't think she's alone. Most readers gravitate toward library and bookstore front racks, home to the bestsellers and recent releases by "name" authors, never venturing beyond to the general fiction and genre sections where the majority of novels reside. All you have to do is wander around your local library or bookstore to know I'm right. With few exceptions, you won't find many readers browsing in other sections. Two of those exceptions are the racks that house cookbooks and advice books.

Over the years I've read and come to enjoy books by authors who have never made it to the front racks. I realized my friend and so many other readers were missing out on some

truly wonderful books. Was there something I could do to bring more readers and authors together? And that brought me back to those racks of cookbooks and advice books because all the authors I know have three things in common, no matter what genre of fiction we write.

First, we're all often asked how to go about getting published. Before you can get published, you have to write a book worthy of publication. Everyone wants to write a book, but few people know how to go about writing one.

We're also very often asked about how we do our research (especially when we're at parties and the person asking the question—usually a guy—has had too much to drink!) How do we research our sex scenes? Have we ever actually killed someone? Do we know any real vampires?

However, there are people who seriously think authors are experts when it comes to love and relationships simply because we write about them. No matter the genre, characters have relationships with other characters in our books. Characters need chemistry to connect, whether it's the positive chemistry between friends and lovers, or the negative chemistry between a protagonist and an antagonist. We have to write believable characters that come alive for our readers. So we must be experts when it comes to relationships, right? Well, whether we're experts or not, we've all had personal relationship experiences and know what has and hasn't worked for us.

And finally, every author I know has a serious sweet tooth. Chocolate or other confections sustain us through pending deadlines, crushing rejection letters, and nasty reviews. We also often celebrate our successes—selling a book, winning a writing award, making a bestseller list, receiving a fabulous review—with decadent indulgences.

So I thought, what if I combined all three of these things authors have in common? Thus was born *Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing*. The goal of this book is to share our favorite dessert recipes (cakes, cookies, pies, candy, and even a few vegan and gluten-free offerings) and our best advice when it comes to relationships and writing. In this way I hope to provide you with tempting treats and sage advice, as well as introduce you to authors you may not know. Hopefully, this book will lead to expanding your reading pleasure beyond the front racks and your go-to authors.

Within the pages of *Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing* you'll be introduced to authors who write romance, mystery, suspense, women's fiction, fantasy, paranormals, young adult, and new adult books. (I've even included a couple of non-fiction authors for those of you who don't read fiction.) Some of the authors write sweet; others write steamy. Some write cozy; others write tense thrillers. Some are debut authors with only one published book; others are multi-published and have had long publishing careers. And yes, some are bestselling authors who may or may not be familiar to you.

Because the goal of *Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing* is to introduce you to authors you may not know, the book isn't set up like a typical cookbook. You won't find the desserts divided into categories. I considered listing authors alphabetically, but those of us at the end of the alphabet always got stuck at the back of the classroom, and many of us still bear the scars of those unpleasant memories. So after mulling several options, I settled on listing the authors in the order they signed on to this project.

Grab a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, settle into a comfy chair, and browse through the pages of *Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing*. Along the way you'll hopefully discover new favorites—both recipes and authors—in addition to gleaning some relationship and writing advice. The advice might not work for you, but it's worked for our contributors. Remember that old TV commercial for Life cereal, "Try it, you'll like it"? Mikey tried it. He liked it. You might, too. You never know.

And although the title of this book is *Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing*, creative people are known for thinking outside the box, and authors are no exception. Not surprisingly, some didn't quite follow the rules. That's why you'll also find a few recipes for no-bake desserts, some not-so-sweet samplings, and even a doggie dessert. You'll also find some unexpected answers to the questions on love and writing. However, just think how boring the world would be if everyone always colored within the lines.

All the recipes are presented as the authors provided them except for editorial tweaking for consistent style throughout the book. In addition, I've kept the British spelling of words from our Canadian and English authors but asked them to provide non-metric measurements. Finally, as tempting as it was, none of the recipes, other than my own submission, were tested by the editor due to her ongoing battle with an expanding waistline.

If you enjoy *Bake, Love, Write: 105 Authors Share Dessert Recipes and Advice on Love and Writing*, please consider posting a review. And if you discover some new favorite authors, please tell your friends about those authors and the books you've enjoyed. Word-of-mouth is an author's best friend, and we count on our readers to provide it.

Bon appétit!
Lois Winston

Lois Winston: Apple Bundt Cake

The only problem with this cake is that you can't stop eating it.

5 cooking apples
2 teaspoons cinnamon
2-1/4 cups sugar

1 cup butter
3 cups flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup orange juice
4 eggs
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon almond extract
confectioner's sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Peel and slice apples. Place in bowl. Add cinnamon and 1/4 cup sugar. Mix to coat apples. Set aside.

Cream the butter and remaining 2 cups of sugar.

Mix all other dry ingredients together. Slowly add dry ingredients to butter/sugar mixture.

Combine eggs, juice, vanilla extract, and almond extract. Slowly add to other ingredients as you continue to mix. Batter will be thick.

Grease and flour bundt pan. Place small amount of batter in bottom of pan. Add a layer of apples. Continue layering batter and apples, with batter as last layer.

Bake for 1-1/2 hours. Cool on wire rack 15-20 minutes. Remove cake from pan. Dust with confectioner's sugar.

Lois Winston is a *USA Today* bestselling author who writes mystery, romance, romantic suspense, chick lit, women's fiction, children's chapter books, and non-fiction under her own name and her Emma Carlyle pen name. *Kirkus Reviews* dubbed her critically acclaimed Anastasia Pollack Crafting Mystery series, "*North Jersey's more mature answer to Stephanie Plum.*" (She plans to have that chiseled on her tombstone!) She's received starred reviews from both *Publishers Weekly* and *Booklist*, won numerous awards for her books, received a Book of the Year nomination from *ForeWord Reviews* and was a Daphne du Maurier Award finalist.

Recent releases include *Decoupage Can Be Deadly*, the latest Anastasia Pollack Crafting Mystery; *Definitely Dead*, the first book in her new Empty Nest Mystery series, and *The Magic Paintbrush*, a children's chapter book.

After working several years for a literary agency and reading through thousands of queries and partials, Lois wrote the writing advice book *Top Ten Reasons Your Novel is Rejected*. Learn more about Lois at her website: <http://www.loiswinston.com>.

What's your recipe for a lasting, loving relationship?

Space! Remember that old saying: “Absence makes the heart grow fonder; familiarity breeds contempt”? It’s true. Partners need to give each other permission to “do their own thing” without creating resentment. No two people are going to have all the same interests, likes, and dislikes and shouldn’t expect each other to forego things they enjoy just because the other person doesn’t like doing those things. That builds up resentments over time and cause problems in a relationship.

And speaking of resentments, don’t keep them bottled up inside you. That’s a recipe for disaster. If something bothers you, talk about it, but do so in a non-judgmental, non-confrontational manner. Don’t expect your partner to be a mind reader. (The same advice extends to relationships with friends and other family members.)

What’s the best writing advice you ever received?

Every scene in your manuscript must serve a purpose, and there are only two purposes to a scene—either to advance the plot or tell the reader something she needs to know about the character(s) *at that moment*. If the scene serves neither of these purposes, it’s filler, and no matter how much you love what you wrote, you need to delete it. Filler has no place in a well-written novel.

Dale Mayer: Mayer Family Unbaked Cheesecake

Makes one 12” cheesecake.

6 cups graham cracker crumbs
1-1/4 cups margarine or butter, melted
3 - 8 ounce packages cream cheese
3 cups whipping cream
1-3/4 cup icing sugar
2 packages gelatin (Knox)
1/2 cup warm water
1 cup boiling water

Mix crumbs and margarine together in 12” spring-form pan. Spread the mixture along bottom and up sides, pressing firmly.

Optional: bake crust in a 350 degree F. oven until golden brown.

Dissolve 2 packs gelatin in 1/2 cup of warm water. Add 1 cup of boiling water, and 1/2 cup whipping cream.

In blender, chunk cream cheese, add gelatin liquid and 1/2 of the sugar. Blend until well mixed. Let sit.

In another bowl, cream whipping cream and the second half of the sugar until stiff. Pour cream cheese mixture into whipping cream, stirring gently until mixed. Pour into crust. Chill until set.

Options:

Fold fresh fruit into mixture at last step or pour half the cream cheese mixture into crust, add layer of fruit, then pour remaining cream cheese mixture. Top cake with fruit puree or chocolate. Use your imagination. The possibilities are endless.

Dale Mayer is a *USA Today* bestselling author best known for her *Psychic Visions* and *Family Blood Ties* series. Her contemporary romances are raw and full of passion and emotion, her thrillers will keep you guessing, and her romantic comedies will keep you giggling. She writes young adult fiction, adult fiction and everything in-between.

Her adult fiction includes her *Psychic Vision* series (*Tuesday's Child*, *Hide 'n Go Seek*, *Maddy's Floor*, *Garden of Sorrow*, *Knock, Knock...*, *Rare Find*, and *Eyes to the Soul*), her *By Death* series (*Touched by Death-Part 1*, *Touched by Death-Part 2*, *Touched by Death-Full book*, *Haunted by Death*, and *Chilled by Death*), her *Second Chances...at Love* series (*Second Chances-Part 1*, *Second Chances-Part 2*, and *Second Chances-Full book*), and her *Charmin Marvin* romantic comedy series (*Broken Protocols #1*, *Broken Protocols #2*, and *Broken Protocols #3*), as well as two stand-alone novels (*It's a Dog's Life* and *SKIN*.)

Learn more about Dale and her books at her website: <http://www.dalemayer.com>.

What's your recipe for a lasting, loving relationship?

All relationships have certain similarities to recipes. A new recipe, like a new relationship requires a sense of adventure and a sense of acceptance to go along with the willingness to adapt it to one's taste. A favorite recipe not used in a long time is like a relationship that's gotten comfortable but could use a bit of spice. You can add ingredients in carefree abandonment to see what you create, or you can systematically try options to make what you have even better.

It's the old favorite recipe that I love. This is the one you don't need to look up. You already know that you have all the main ingredients and if you have to substitute for a missing one, you know what is liked and what will work because you've spent a lot of time on this one already. In fact, you love it anyway it works—just like a long term loving relationship!

What's the best writing advice you ever received?

Never give up! As long as you keep putting words to paper, you will improve.

Jan Carol: Bread Pudding

My recipe comes from something my mother made when I was growing up. It's moist, and delicious with whipped cream or ice cream served on top...hot or cold.

8 slices fresh bread, torn in coarse pieces

8 eggs

1/2 cup butter, melted

2 cups sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 cups milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Place bread evenly in 9" x 13" pan. Mix rest of ingredients together, and pour over bread. Bake 1 hour.

Jan Carol grew up literally on the Monterey Bay beaches. If she wasn't at home, you can bet she was on the beach. She began writing her first novel at fourteen but didn't finish it until she was twenty-four. Moving to different states, her imagination moved with her, incorporating a little bit of the places she's lived and a lot of her life's experiences in her books.

She's been married for more than thirty-nine years with six children and seventeen grandchildren and has lived in the Ozarks the last twenty-seven years. Her life is never really dull! Read more about Jan and her books at her website:

<http://www.jancarolromancenovels.weebly.com>.

What's your recipe for a lasting, loving relationship?

Give much more than you take from your spouse, significant other, friend, etc. Allow them to be what they are, as long as it isn't harming others—in other words, don't hold them back from their talents and abilities, even if it means you aren't in the picture all the time. Never take them for granted; they have needs that should be met the best we know how.

What's the best writing advice you ever received?

I write because the stories are there, wanting to come out. I had no idea what to do with them for years. I let others read them and they liked them, including my children, and they kept telling me, "Keep writing. Get your stories published." Eventually, thanks to one of my daughters, I did just that.

Meg Bellamy: Easy & Delicious Grasshopper Pie

Serves 8

25 Oreo cookies
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup creme de menthe, white or green
2 cups heavy cream
a few drops green food coloring
1 (7.5-ounces) jar of Marshmallow Fluff

Melt butter. Crush Oreo cookies. Set aside a few crumbs. Mix the rest with melted butter. Press onto bottom and sides of a 9” pie pan, making sure not to leave any gaps on the bottom. Chill crust while preparing filling.

Gradually add creme de menthe to Marshmallow Fluff, mixing until well blended. Add green food coloring sufficient to achieve desired shade. Whip cream until soft peaks form. Fold into marshmallow mixture, blending thoroughly after each addition. Pour mixture into pie shell. Wrap in foil and freeze until ready to serve.

Meg Bellamy has many passions. Along with her husband, her family and her books, these include language, travel, cooking, baking, knitting, and quilting. If shopping were an Olympic sport, Meg would score several gold medals. It’s a good thing Meg loves to travel, since she lives in the gorgeous San Francisco Bay Area, but her daughter settled in New Jersey and her son in England. Talk about Frequent Flying! Between flights this long-time language teacher writes contemporary romance and women’s fiction.

Meg enjoys looking at life and love with a good dose of humor and irony. Her single title novel, *Homecoming*, was released by The Wild Rose Press. She’s currently writing two series of romantic stories—TV Tales, and Nuclear Nuptials. Her latest indie release is *Divorce by Chocolate*. Learn more about Meg and her books at her website: <http://www.MegBellamy.com>.

What’s your recipe for a lasting, loving relationship?

First and foremost, pick the right partner for you.

Be romantic, and be real. There’s a time and place for each quality. Sometimes romance and reality can occupy the same space and time; sometimes they can’t. Don’t let the romance blind you to the demands of reality, and don’t let harsh doses of reality rob you of your romance. Be flexible.

Love is a gift and a blessing. It’s a force of nature but is also delicate and in need of care and feeding. If you’re fortunate enough to love and be loved, don’t take your good fortune for granted. Nurture your love and pamper your love during the good times so that it can weather the tough times.

A sense of humor is crucial.

Focus on what you appreciate about your love, and remind yourself of these qualities when mundane annoyances make you want to grind your teeth.

Take the time to smell the roses, the coffee, or whatever floats your love boat.

Did I mention that a sense of humor is essential?

What’s the best writing advice you ever received?

Read, read, read. Write, write, write. Revise, revise, revise. Repeat.

It's essential to know your own style. Mine is to fill the page and then revise—a lot. Some people are more content to do a lot of planning and write such an excellent first draft that they don't require much revision. I envy them, but I realize that style doesn't work for me.

Writing is solitary, but it's also important to be part of a community that “gets” you. “Talk” with other writers—whether on-line or at meetings and conferences. Participate in the generosity of the writing community—both as a recipient and as a donor.

Stick with it and don't lose sight of your dreams!

Bobbi A. Chukran: Lavender Shortbread Cookies

This recipe is easy, and everyone loves these. It makes a great dessert to go with rose tea or as a gift for the hostess of a garden party. They freeze well, but that's usually not a problem. Makes about 3-dozen large cookies, or 4-dozen smaller ones.

3/4 cup unsalted butter
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 teaspoons dried lavender flowers, organic, finely chopped
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, vanilla extract, and lavender flowers. Mix well.

In another bowl, combine the flour and baking powder, then add to the lavender mixture. Stir until well blended.

Drop by teaspoonfuls onto ungreased baking sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes or until lightly brown on the edges. Cool for a minute or two, then transfer cookies to a baking rack to continue cooling.

Bobbi A. Chukran is a Texas native who loves writing stories about small-town quirky characters who just can't help but get into trouble. She's the author of an historical mystery, *Lone Star Death*, the Nameless, Texas series of short stories, and the novella, *Dye, Dyeing, Dead*. Bobbi's characters are usually interested in gardening, cooking, cats and folklore—just like she is. Bobbi has also written award-winning plays for youth. *Annerella & the (Very Awesome) Good Queen Fairy Cowmother* and *Little Red Riding Boots & Cooter Coyote (Master of Disguise)* are the latest, published by Brooklyn Publishing.

Bobbi tends a huge cottage garden of culinary herbs and old-fashioned flowers. She moons over eighty heirloom rosebushes that came with her vintage 1930s home, a never-ending source of fun DIY projects. Learn more about Bobbi and her books at her website: <http://www.bobbichukran.com>.

What's your recipe for a lasting, loving relationship?

My recipe for a loving relationship is to marry someone who likes to cook and can make good coffee, because if you're an author, you will starve otherwise. My husband of 25(!) years took numerous cooking classes before I met him. He was cruising for chicks at the time, I suspect, but the kitchen skills he picked up have come in very handy over the years.

What's the best writing advice you ever received?

I got some advice on making art years ago from a good friend of mine, Sharon Wilcox. She said, "Don't let your head think any farther than the end of your hands." I don't paint much anymore, but I do use that same advice when I'm writing. It's hard because of many distractions here, but it's good advice I try to follow.