

History of Baking

History of Baking – Study Notes

1. Origins (Pre?history to 4000?BCE)

Period	Region	Key Developments
Pre? agricultural	Nomadic groups worldwide	• Early humans mixed crushed grains with water and baked the paste on hot stones or in ashes. • Domestication of wheat, barley, and rye ? surplus grain.
Neolithic Revolution	Fertile Crescent (Mesopotamia, Levant)	• First simple ovens (clay pits) allowed more controlled baking. • Large communal ovens; evidence of leavened bread (wild yeast).
4000?BCE	Egypt	• Bread became staple, religious offering, and economic unit (e.g., “bread rations”).

2. Ancient Civilizations (3000?BCE – 500?CE)

Civilization	Innovations	Social/Economic Impact
Egypt	• Use of sourdough starter (wild yeast). • Introduction of “pan bread” (flat, round loaves). • Clay ovens with door and chimney.	Bread as daily ration; baker’s guilds emerged; tomb reliefs depict bakers.
Mesopotamia	• First written recipes on cuneiform tablets (e.g., “bappir” barley?beer bread).	Bread used as payment; bakeries attached to temples.
Greece	• Introduction of honey?sweetened pastries (e.g., loukoumades). • Use of olive oil in doughs.	Baking linked to festivals and symposiums; professional bakers (?????????).

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Civilization	Innovations	Social/Economic Impact
Rome	• Millstone grinding ? finer flour. • Development of <i>panis quadratus</i> (square loaf) and <i>panis siligineus</i> (fine white bread). • First “baker’s guild” (collegium pistorum).	Bread distribution through <i>annona</i> (state grain dole); public bakeries (pistrinae) supplied soldiers and citizens.

3. Medieval Period (500?–?1500)

Era	Region	Milestones
Early Middle Ages	Europe	• Monastic bakeries preserve Roman techniques. • Introduction of rye and oats in northern climates.
High Middle Ages	France, Italy, Germany	• Emergence of guild regulations for bakers (e.g., 13th? century French <i>Charte des Boulangers</i>). • First documented use of chemical leavening – alum and saltpeter for quick breads.
Late Middle Ages	England	• <i>Baker’s Guild</i> charter (1215) standardizes loaf sizes and weights. • Introduction of spices (cinnamon, cloves) from trade routes ? richer pastries.

Key technological note:

- **Mill improvements** (water?powered mills) increased flour quality and volume, fueling urban bakery growth.

4. Renaissance & Early Modern Era (1500?–?1800)

Development	Description
Refined milling	Roller mills (early forms) produce finer, whiter flour; white bread becomes a status symbol.
Yeast isolation	17th?century French bakers begin cultivating <i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i> from wine fermentations, leading to more reliable leavening.

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Development

Description

**Pastry
explosion