



# The Power of Baking Bread

*Breadmaking offered comfort during the pandemic*

BY BRIDGET SHIRVELL

## Eat + Drink



**LOCAL LOAVES** // *Idyllwild Bread ready for delivery to a Fairfield County locale.*

» BREAD, we just can't quit baking you. Stuck inside during the early days of the pandemic, we traded work attire for flour-speckled aprons, swapped texts on sourdough starters, filled Instagram feeds with snaps of fresh loaves. We kneaded and pounded to distract from doomscrolling and bought so much flour supermarkets couldn't keep it in stock.

"It's timeless, eternal food," said Beth Mansfield Scott. Missing her Bay Area home and sourdough bread, Scott began baking while pregnant with her second daughter, eventually starting her micro-bakery, Idyllwild Bread. Over the years, a slice of sourdough with butter has become a comforting bedtime snack for her daughters. But the happiness bread sparks isn't limited merely to those munching on it.

"It has a beginning,

middle, and end," said Liz Jorgensen of Insight Counseling. "When you're in a time of uncertainty, and so much is up in the air, baking can give our lives predictability. And it's a way to give joy without a big discussion or production."

Baking, it seems, is a powerful tool for anxious minds.

In March, Mike Geller of farm-to-home delivery service and store Mike's Organic Market got daily flour requests. For the first time in its 11-year-old history, the company started selling several types of flour.

"We couldn't keep it in stock," Geller said.

Seven-plus months into our new normal, Geller said sales remain strong, and he hears stories of bread-baking adventures from customers.

If you haven't yet fallen in love with baked bread, the secret to a delicious loaf,

according to Scott, is in the repetition. "It may not rise the way you want it to. It may not look the way you want it to, but keep going," Scott said, adding to remember that when you tweak a recipe to make sure you only change one thing at a time.

If you are ready to pause your bread baking, you can store your sourdough starter.

"Keep sourdough in the fridge when not actively baking, and feed it once a week. When you are ready to begin baking, bring it out and feed it three to four times a day (every four hours) for a couple of days to get it livened up for use," said Ron Silver, the owner of NYC's Bubby's, which has a sourdough starter dating back to the 1890s.

And when you need comfort again, the starter will be ready. Just keep baking.

## Cocktail Hour

» **BARN DOOR'S ROSE WATER COSMO** made with Arbikie Potato Vodka is fragrant but not too sweet—however, those with a sweet tooth will enjoy the martini glass's sugared rim. Barn Door's authentic, rustic cuisine is the ideal complement to Connecticut-based (albeit Scotland-distilled) Arbikie Farm Distillery's terroir-driven spirits. Arbikie Potato Vodka is crafted with three different varieties of potatoes, giving it an all-natural, smooth, vanilla creaminess that's perfectly balanced with Barn Door's homemade rose-infused water.

### Barn Door's Rose Water Cosmo

- ▶ 2 oz. Arbikie Potato Vodka
- ▶ ½ oz. Triple Sec
- ▶ 3 oz. Rose Water
- ▶ Splash of Simple Syrup

Combine all ingredients. Shake well and pour into a sugar-rimmed martini glass. Garnish with a rose petal.

