

Loafing Around

Tony Ganzer is feeling accomplished—celebratory even—that the “baguette disaster” of 2006 is far behind him. “I was embarrassed. I had worked at a bakery for three or four months after college and I was really proud that I had picked up a craft,” he said. “I probably killed the yeast.”

A well-traveled journalist, a string of professional opportunities abroad made it difficult for Tony to nurture his craft, but each place he lived and worked rekindled his interest in baking. “I’ve been very fortunate to have worked extensively in Europe over the years, exposing me to cultures that champion breads,” he said.

In Germany, Tony ate Vollkornbrot, a dense, chewy whole grain bread, and Roggenbrot, a dark rye sourdough. While covering post-revolutionary Egypt, he ate Fino bread (a French-style roll) for breakfast most mornings. “As a journalist, I try to find the context to where I’m working and living, and sometimes bread helps tell that story,” he said.

Now as the afternoon host of “All Things Considered” on public radio station WCPN-FM, Tony has managed to get back to his baking and has picked up his quest for a better baguette. Now, he shares the hard-fought lessons of his baking practice on his website, *The Baking Journalist*, where he merges breadmaking instruction with interesting insights from a career that has taken him around the world.

Tony’s compact yet functional workstation is set in a kitchen alcove. Recording himself on an iPhone, he demonstrates step-by-step instructions that are easy to follow. The takeaway being that you don’t need much more than a reliable recipe and some perseverance to master basic breads. Although, it did take him several months to perfect his holy grail—the baguette. Friends in rural France had imparted their influence on him, from whom he “learned to think about baguettes as non-negotiable parts of a proper meal.”

Every week he bakes a few loaves of a hearty wheat and oat sandwich bread that his kids enjoy. “I am very much an amateur baker, but even the little knowledge I have is valuable to my family. I know every ingredient in each loaf. It fills our home with a great smell and warmth, and it connects to our food in a much



PHOTO BY LAURA WATILO BLAKE

There’s a story behind every loaf of bread that Tony Ganzer bakes.

more hands-on way.” He has mastered a braided Swiss Zopf bread and a peasant-style Rosemary Asiago bread, among others.

Many of the videos combine a recipe with a great story, like the time he had to leave his backpack in a public bathroom at the Egyptian pyramids, or when he encountered Bono at a protest in Dublin. 

—Lisa Sands

Follow along with Tony on his baking and reporting journey at TheBakingJournalist.com. Visit EdibleCleveland.com for his hearty wheat and oat sandwich bread recipe.

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