Une Baguette Tradition

Description

- “Une baguette tradition” is a type of French baguette that adheres to specific traditional baking methods and ingredients, offering a high-quality and artisanal version of the classic French bread. The term “tradition” signifies that the baguette is made following the strict guidelines established by the French bread decree of 1993, which aims to preserve the authenticity and quality of French bread.
- **Ingredients**:
  - A baguette tradition is made with only the following ingredients:
    - Wheat flour
    - Water
    - Salt
    - Yeast or natural leavening agents
  - It does not contain any additives, preservatives, or improvers, which ensures a pure and natural flavor.
- **Baking Process**:
  - The process of making a baguette tradition involves:
    - **Long Fermentation**: The dough undergoes a long fermentation process, which can take up to 24 hours. This slow fermentation allows for the development of deeper flavors and a more complex aroma.
    - **Hand Shaping**: The dough is often hand-shaped by skilled bakers, contributing to its rustic appearance.
    - **High Temperature Baking**: The baguette is baked at a high temperature, resulting in a crispy and caramelized crust while keeping the interior soft and chewy.
- **Characteristics**:
  - **Crust**: The crust of a baguette tradition is typically golden-brown, thick, and crunchy. It often has a slightly blistered surface due to the high baking temperature.
  - **Crumb**: The interior crumb is creamy and slightly off-white, with irregular holes that indicate a well-fermented dough.
  - **Flavor**: The flavor is rich and nutty, with a slight tang from the long fermentation process. The simplicity of the ingredients allows the natural flavors of the wheat to shine through.
  - **Aroma**: A baguette tradition has a fragrant aroma, combining the scents of freshly baked bread with subtle hints of malt and yeast.

How to Enjoy

- A baguette tradition can be enjoyed in various ways:
  - **Freshly Baked**: Best enjoyed when fresh out of the oven, with the crust still warm and crispy.
  - **With Butter and Jam**: Spread with high-quality butter and jam for a simple yet delightful breakfast or snack.
  - **Sandwiches**: Used as the base for traditional French sandwiches, such as jambon-beurre

(ham and butter) or fromage (cheese).
    - **Accompanying Meals**: Served alongside meals, particularly soups, stews, and salads, to soak up sauces and add a crunchy texture.

Paris Competition for Best Baguette

- Every year, Paris hosts the prestigious competition “Grand Prix de la Baguette de Tradition Française de la Ville de Paris” to crown the best baguette tradition in the city.
- The competition is judged by a panel of experts who evaluate the baguettes based on criteria such as appearance, baking, crumb, smell, and taste.
- The winning baker receives not only acclaim and increased business but also the honor of supplying baguettes to the President of France daily until the next annual winner is announced.
- **Tip**: If you are in Paris, look for bakeries displaying a sign that they are a winner or finalist of this competition for an exceptional baguette experience.

Where to Buy

- ***Une Baguette Tradition*** can be found at most artisanal bakeries in France. Look for signs that say “baguette tradition” to show you are knowledgeable and asking for the authentic product.
- **Tip**: It is often worth seeking a reputable bakery known for its quality bread. All Parisians have their favorite boulangerie. Look for a boulangerie with a long line flowing out onto the street. When in doubt, look for a Parisian with a baguette and politely ask where they bought their baguette. Most will be proud to explain where *their* favorite boulangerie is located. Note that there is a second class of baguette called *Baguette Normal* that is made of inferior ingredients that product an inferior baguette that is less firm and not as crusty.
- **Important Boulangeries** : In Paris, renowned bakeries like Poilâne, Du Pain et des Idées, and Boulangerie Eric Kayser are excellent places to find a top-notch baguette tradition.
- **Baguette Tradition Competition** - Meilleure Baguette since 1994. Five criteria were taken into account to compare the different traditions: baking, taste, crumb, honeycombing and appearance. The winning boulanger receives €4,000 and the honor of serving the President of France's residence for one year. The cash award is a pittance given the new lines of Parisians and Tourists who form lines all open hours to taste the Best Baguette Tradition in Paris and arguably, the best in all of France, and indeed, the world. Sales explode knowing that the Boulangerie with the Best Baguette Tradition, will certainly have the best of *all* breads and pâtisseries.
- **Winner of Meilleure Baguette 2024** Xavier Netry, de la boulangerie Utopie Paris 11eme

Enjoying a baguette tradition is a quintessential French experience, offering a taste of traditional craftsmanship and the rich culinary heritage of France.

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