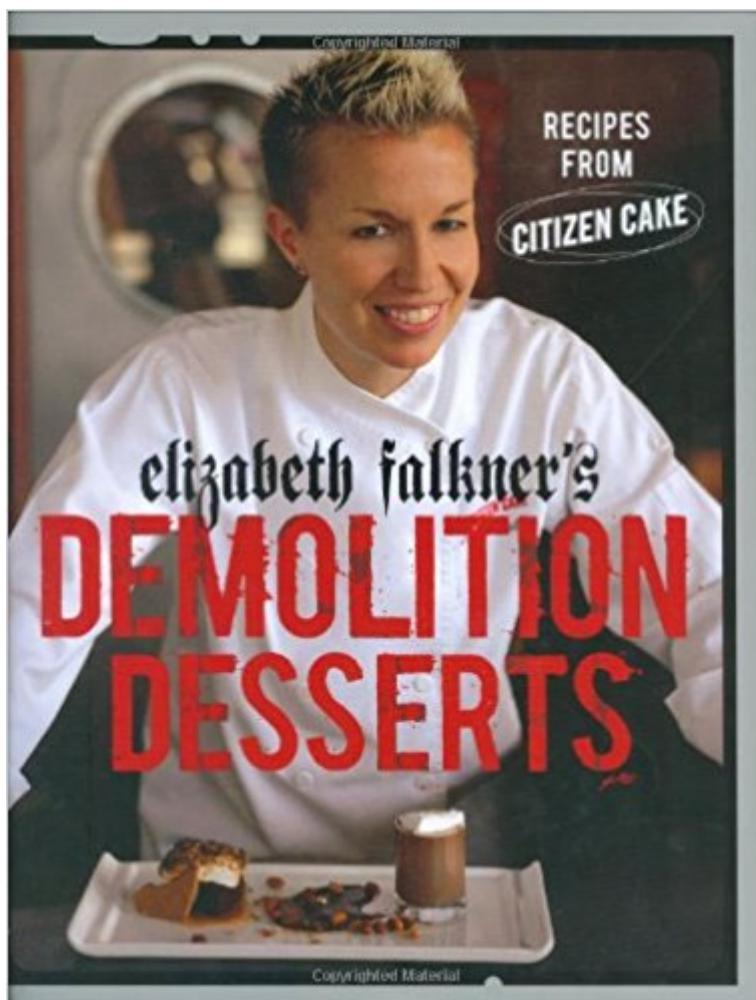


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# Elizabeth Falkner's Demolition Desserts: Recipes From Citizen Cake



## Synopsis

Â In Demolition Desserts, Elizabeth presents her favorite creations, from the cookies, brownies, and cupcakes beloved by Citizen Cake regulars to the plated desserts that have made her one of the most dynamic culinary talents of her generation. Elizabeth begins with a chapter devoted to chocolate chip cookies, building from a straight-up version to the more-is-more Chocolate Chip Mania. Provocatively titled compositions like A Chocolate Tart Named Desire, S'More A Palooza, and Gingerbread Bauhaus capture Elizabeth at the top of her art, breaking down classic desserts and reconstructing them flavor by flavor. Elizabeth has adapted even her most elaborate desserts for the home kitchen, and each dessert is equipped with a detailed make-ahead timeline and a minimalist version for those pressed for time. Stunning color photographs illustrate every main recipe in the book, and manga-style animation--starring Elizabeth's pastry-obsessed alter ego, Caremi--empower home cooks to go forth boldly and bake.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is not for the traditional home baker looking for something to bring to next week's pot luck. It's not really for the home baker, period, though Falkner has made an effort to provide thorough explanations (she succeeds) and minimalist versions of each dessert. That is not to say that only a professional will enjoy Demolition Desserts, it's merely that most home cooks aren't going to find a book of composed/plated desserts terribly useful. If you are looking to expand your baking/cooking skills or to find inspiration, however, you'll be very, very excited. One of Falkner's main approaches to creating a new dessert is taking an old dessert and re-imagining and rearranging it: A Banana Split with pineapple sashimi and brandied cherries, a Lemon Meringue pie where each element gets

to shine separately, "Tiramisushi" with biscotti chopsticks. Her ideas and the wacky, approachable layout of this book will really get the ball rolling if you're looking for a new approach to the same-old, same-old. She even gets into some food science - there's pages exploring sugar and different gums and thickeners. The marshmallow recipe even has a variation using xanthan gum. If you want to ease into this, the first chapter explores Chocolate Chip Cookies and the publisher's website offers the Chocolate Chip Espresso Cookies recipe for downloading. *Demolition Desserts* is gutsy and inspiring, not for the faint of heart!

I stayed up reading this book in bed when I bought it. The book has so much personality but very clear information on the subtlety of dessert making. A cursory flip through the book, the reader might see too many fancy dessert projects too ambitious for the home cook. Upon a closer look, the author breaks down a fancy presentation into each component, and everything is "modular" so one can opt to make only one component, say the cheesecake custard that goes into the fancy assembly of "Waking up in a city that never sleeps" and enjoy the custard very satisfactorily by itself. I have already tested several recipes from the book having recently purchased it. I was very impressed with the writing that delivered the information on handling ingredients which goes beyond simply providing the formula. There are simple iconic desserts in the book as well, including the author's version of the classic chocolate chip cookie, which is simply divine.

True to Ms. Falkner's reputation as a renowned pastry chef, these recipes are neither simple nor quick. However, neither are they unnecessarily complex, and there are some minor shortcuts you can take if you're in a hurry. For example, one of my favorite recipes from this book is a stunning s'mores brownie recipe. Delightfully, the book includes recipes for homemade marshmallows and graham crackers so that you can go all-out. However, if you're in a hurry and in need of an impressive dessert, believe me, you'll still impress people if you make this recipe using purchased marshmallows and graham crackers. Likewise, you can make your own eggless lemon curd with which to fill buttermilk cupcakes (don't forget the meringue topping!), but if you find yourself short on time, the cupcakes will still wow people if you pick out a high-quality store-bought lemon curd. Don't take too many shortcuts, though, because it's worth it to go all-out on these recipes when you have the chance. The date cupcakes filled with toffee and topped with a coconut cream cheese frosting will make you think you've died and gone to heaven---probably right before they send you into sugar shock, naturally. Sure, these are fancy recipes that take real work and occasionally use specialty ingredients. However, there are plenty of instructions included to make sure you can reproduce

them beautifully. I haven't found a single mistake in the recipes we've used, and I just love the cartoons (by Ms. Falkner's brother) included in the book---the touch of whimsy is delightful. If you're the kind of cook who loves to do more than just gaze longingly at fancy food photography, then this is the fun, delicious cookbook you've been longing for.

I find some of the other reviews on this book odd - this is a book review site, if you want to review her restaurants you are in the wrong place! Similarly, the author's television personality, whether genuine or created for that medium, are not relevant to whether this is or is not a good recipe book and worth buying. Anyway the book itself. The positives: the humour of the cartoon illustrations, the introduction of more obscure ingredients and the imagination of the presentation. Finally, the best aspect of this book is the way that more detailed recipes are set out. This includes a timetable of how far in advance you can prep some of the components - this is a great help if you want a wow looking dessert for a party and don't want to have to do the work at the last minute. One negative is the disagreement between the weights and the volumes for some of the ingredients. As someone bought up on weights, and only recently started to use recipes with volumes, it's confusing if the two measures are not even close. Another issue is one of sizing, one recipe gave rise to portions about twice an appropriate size whereas another was about 2/3 the size of a regular portion, but each recipe that I have tried has worked. Overall this is a good book for anyone looking for some imaginative dessert recipes as well as standard cookie/ cup cake recipes.

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