

## Chef Nancy Silverton

Chef Nancy Silverton began her delicious career in Sonoma, California, where she started working in a vegetarian kitchen in her college dormitory. After discovering cooking was her passion, she decided to pursue an “official” culinary education, and enrolled in Le Cordon Bleu cooking school in London, England. Graduating with a solid foundation in culinary arts, Silverton returned to the states to begin working at Michael’s restaurant in Santa Monica, CA under Jimmy Brinkeley. It was there that Silverton discovered her passion for pastry and returned to Europe to attend Lenotre Culinary Institute in Plasir, France to perfect her skills. Upon returning to the states Nancy was invited by Wolfgang Puck to be the head pastry chef at his world renowned southern California restaurant, Spago.

In June of 1989, Silverton opened the restaurant Campanile with partners Mark Peel and Manfred Krankl; an institution that all Angelenos cherish to this day. When developing the restaurant menu and sourcing premium ingredients and vendors, Silverton soon realized that the same bread she tasted and studied in Europe was nowhere to be found in Los Angeles. In fact, there was no authentic artisan bread in all of Southern California. Longing to serve a crisp crust and soft airy interior, with the tang of an all-natural sourdough starter, Silverton began teaching herself the ancient art of sourdough bread baking.

Little did Silverton know that her lesson in baking would become the nation’s top artisan bakery; on January 1, 1989, La Brea Bakery opened its doors in the 1500 square foot storefront bakery adjacent to Campanile. Silverton has developed hundreds of recipes, keeping the shelves stocked at La Brea Bakery. Today, La Brea Bakery’s freshly baked breads are available in 8 different countries, and maintain the same signature taste, texture, and quality that was born in on South La Brea Avenue over 15 years ago.



In 1990, Silverton was named “Pastry Chef of the Year” by the James Beard Foundation. These days, you can still find Silverton busy creating and innovating in the kitchen. Most recently, she has completed her 7<sup>th</sup> cookbook, “A Twist of the Wrist”, released in March of 2007.

In November of 2006, Silverton opened her first new restaurant since departing Campanile in 2004. Pizzeria Mozza, one half of a two-part restaurant with partners Mario Batali and Joe Bastianich, opened to rave reviews. Osteria Mozza, quickly followed in July of 2007, and was nominated as Best New Restaurant by the James Beard Foundation for that year.

Silverton is also heavily involved in the Garden School Project of Los Angeles and the Meals-On-Wheels program in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. By supporting the Garden School Project’s commitment to nutritional education in public grade schools and raising funds and awareness for the elderly that are fed each day by Meals-On-Wheels, Silverton is dedicated to sharing her love of food with two very different generations. Silverton practices what she preaches. “Simple, all-natural ingredients lead to artful nutrition.”

In 2003 Silverton was nominated as a member of Marshall Fields (now Macy’s) Culinary Council. Macy’s currently operates two La Brea Bakery branded kiosks, one at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, CA and one at Fashion Island in Newport Beach, CA, inspired by the Original Bakery in Los Angeles, CA opened by Silverton in 1989.

Silverton has an amazing capacity for embracing the beauty of wonderful food, and will undoubtedly continue to do so for the rest of her ingredient inspired life. Each loaf, each leaf of lettuce, each lunch, is an entire world of its own waiting to be discovered, and she will never stop exploring.

## **Pain Perdue (makes 4 servings)**

### **For the bread:**

1 1/2 cups whole milk  
1 egg  
3 tablespoons mild flavored honey, such as wildflower  
1/2 vanilla bean, split and scraped  
Zest of 1 orange, finely grated using a micro plane  
1 cinnamon stick  
4-3/4" slices of stale bread (I used raisin walnut the first time, and white La Brea Bakery table bread the second time)  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
6 tablespoons confectioners' sugar

### **For the bananas:**

2 ripe bananas, sliced into 1/2 inch wedges on a bias  
2 tablespoons light brown sugar  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

### **For the Rum Raisin Sauce:**

1/2 cup raisins, soaked in 1/2 cup light rum, then drained, rum reserved  
1/2 cup water  
3/4 cup granulated sugar  
3 1/2 tablespoons butter

### **To prepare the bread:**

In a bowl, whisk together the milk, eggs and honey. Add the vanilla bean and scrapings, orange zest and cinnamon sticks and let stand at room temperature.

Heat the 3-quart All-Clad saucepan over medium-heat and melt 1 tablespoon of butter. Carefully dip each piece of bread into the soaking liquid and squeeze gently to soak thoroughly. Working with 2 slices of the stale bread at a time, generously dust each slice with 3/4 tablespoons confectioners' sugar and place sugared-side down in the pan. The pan should sizzle. Adjust the flame accordingly. Cook until the bread is medium to light brown and caramelized, but not burned. Just before flipping, dust each slice with another 3/4 tablespoon confectioners' sugar, then cook the other side. Set both slices aside and repeat with the remaining 2 slices, using the remaining 1 tablespoon butter and 3 tablespoons confectioners' sugar. (Slices can be prepared up to 1 hour in advance).

### **To caramelize the bananas:**

In the same pan, melt 2 tablespoons butter over medium-low heat. Stir in the brown sugar. Add the bananas to the pan and gently cook until slightly tender and coated with the brown sugar caramel. Set aside, covered to keep warm.

### **To prepare the rum raisin sauce:**

In a clean 3 quart All-Clad sauce pan, mix the sugar and water together. They will produce a consistency of wet sand. Cook over high heat, tilting and swirling the pan until a caramel forms. Remove from the heat. Add the raisins and reserved rum. The caramel will seize up but will melt again. Whisk in the butter.

### **To serve:**

Arrange bread slices on a platter, and top with warm caramelized bananas. Pour hot rum raisin sauce over the top and enjoy!