



# A Slice of Heaven

Life's simplest, most irresistible delight — a slice of buttered bread — begins with a visit to one of these notable bakeries, where dedicated bakers blend art, science, time and fire to form hearty loaves.

Iconic Paris boulangerie Poilâne's famous four-and-a-half pound round boule sports a rugged crust topped with a thick dusting of flour. Stone-ground whole-grain flour, natural yeasts and wood-burning ovens contribute to a rustic, traditional loaf. [poilane.fr](http://poilane.fr)

San Francisco's Acme Bread Company, pioneer of the American artisan bread movement, perfects California sourdough, a tart golden loaf with a robust tang and Gold Rush heritage. [acmebread.com](http://acmebread.com)

Zingerman's legendary deli in Ann Arbor, Mich., masters Jewish rye bread. Their shiny nut-brown iteration of this American hybrid has a dense, deeply flavored interior with the soulful twin sparks of rye and caraway seeds. [zingermans.com](http://zingermans.com)

Since 1570, Bäckerei Haverland in Soest, Germany, has been crafting heavy, dark loaves of pumpernickel. Baked 24 hours in a steam-filled oven, this old-world masterpiece is composed of just rye and water. [baeckerei-haverland.de](http://baeckerei-haverland.de)

Sullivan Street Bakery's flagship loaf, *pane pugliese*, is dark brown and aggressively crusty, with a tender springy interior laced with irregular holes and a subtle caramel aftertaste. Visit the Manhattan bakery, where "Master Classes for the Home Baker" are sometimes offered. [sullivanstreetbakery.com](http://sullivanstreetbakery.com) — *Annelise Kelly*