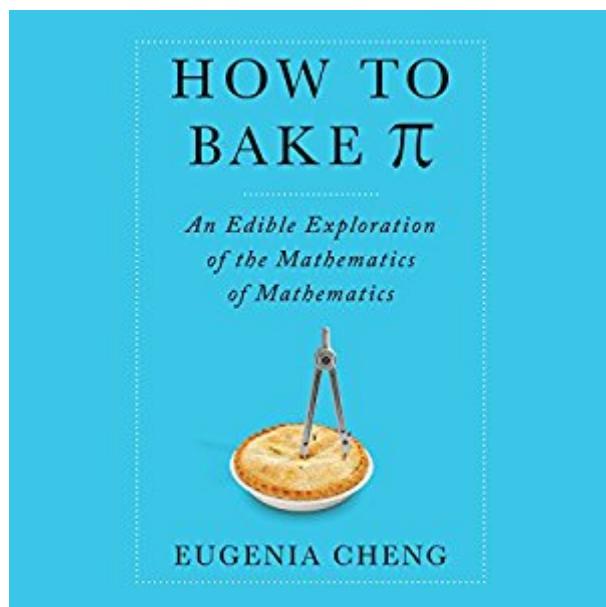


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# How To Bake Pi: An Edible Exploration Of The Mathematics Of Mathematics



## Synopsis

What is math? And how exactly does it work? In *How to Bake Pi*, math professor Eugenia Cheng provides an accessible introduction to the logic of mathematics - sprinkled throughout with recipes for everything from crispy duck to cornbread - that illustrates to the general listener the beauty of math. Rather than dwell on the math of our high school classes, with formulas to memorize and confusing symbols to decipher, Cheng takes us into a world of abstract mathematics, showing us how math can be so much more than we ever thought possible. Cheng is an expert on category theory, a cutting-edge subject that is all about figuring out how math works, a kind of mathematics of mathematics. In *How to Bake Pi*, Cheng starts with the basic question "What is math?" to explain concepts like abstraction, generalization, and idealization. By going back to the logical foundation of the math we all know (and may or may not love), she shows that math is actually designed to make difficult things easier. From there, she introduces us to category theory, explaining how it works to organize and simplify the whole discipline of mathematics. The result is a book that combines some of the most satisfying features of popular math books - the thrill of truly understanding things that may or may not have been confounding in high school - while still looking long and hard into unexplored territory. Through lively writing and easy-to-follow explanations, *How to Bake Pi* takes even the most hardened math-phobe on a journey to the cutting edge of mathematical research.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 18 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HighBridge, a Division of Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: May 5, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00VVSBL6

Best Sellers Rank: #61 in Books > Science & Math > Mathematics > Pure Mathematics > Group Theory #65 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science > Mathematics #259 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Lifestyle & Home > Cooking

## Customer Reviews

I can't believe how good this book is for illuminating what mathematics is. I have spent most of the

past forty-five years trying to find the words to communicate what Eugenia Cheng has so masterfully done in this book. Whenever I get a chance in the future to talk about mathematics I will steal her metaphors and examples. I will also be recommending the book to all of my colleagues in education as well as students. I could not stop reading and wondered if she could continue, chapter after chapter, to come up with examples to make her case. She succeeded right up to the end. I am a little sorry now that I did not pursue Category Theory with more diligence when I first encountered it in the 60's, but I may look into it again at this late date.

I found this to be a terrific book and I wish I had been exposed to this while a student. It certainly makes mathematics much more comprehensible. On reading this book I've realized that my career in IT has been all about category theory. I would have given this book five stars, except that I recently purchased Cheng's recently released book, *Cakes, Custard and Category Theory*... which is this book with a different title. And why aren't the two titles cross referenced by using 's Formats and Editions feature? Just because the publishers are different, doesn't excuse this literal duplicity.

This is a wonderful book for people who love math. (It doesn't hurt to have an interest in baking as well.) Eugenia Cheng does an excellent job of talking about math in connection with baking. I knew nothing about category math, or her, before I started her book, but when I finished it, I felt like I had a basic introduction and an interest in reading more of what she's done and more about category math. The section at the end was particularly good; it was clear, passionate, persuasive, and engaging. This was one of the best books I've read so far this year.

I wish my math teachers had read this. She changes the emotional basis of our relationship to math. Very healthy and useful.

I gave up. Problem: most of the formulaic examples are pictures, not text, so adjusting text size has no effect on the formulae. I read with bold text about 1/4 inch tall and struggled to discern the pale italic formulae less than 1/8 tall. Reading about math shouldn't be harder than understanding math. This may be a great book but I'll never know.

When I read the reviews about this book it seemed like an "easy to read book about mathematics." Although it starts out that way, about 3/4 of the way through the math gets pretty deep and the book, for me, became less inviting. If you're a math geek this book is probably your cup of tea, just not so

much for me.

This is a much more interesting view of math than high school. It is not too abstract. There are applications to thinking that apply to everyday life. The cooking examples made it more interesting.

An interesting approach to mathematics, but got beyond the comprehension of someone without a background in mathematics. Though aimed at the general public, it probably would be most useful to those who need a refresher and update on current mathematical theory.

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