

From Bread Factory to Artisan Home Bakery with David Kaminer

David Crabill: Welcome to the Forrager podcast where I talk with cottage food businesses about their strategies for running a food business from home. I'm David Crabill, and today I'm talking with David Kaminer, who runs a bakery, [Raleigh Street Bakery](#) out of Denver, Colorado.

I actually got to meet David a few years ago. I was meeting a cottage food friend in Colorado and he said, Oh, you gotta check out David's bakery. And so we swung by and I was super impressed. He had the baked goods on the racks that he had made that morning. And the most impressive thing aside from, you know, customers coming in pretty regularly to buy his stuff was he had this pizza oven or brick oven built into the side of his kitchen. It was a really impressive thing.

But anyway, I know that David has been growing his business for the last few years and he even runs workshops and educates people about how to make bread in their home kitchen. So I am looking forward to hearing where his business has gone in the last few years since I've seen him.

And with that, welcome to the show, David. Nice to have you here.

David Kaminer: [00:01:07] Thanks for having me, David. It's really exciting to be here.

David Crabill: [00:01:10] Yeah. So can you just, uh, take us back to the beginning? When did you get started and where did the idea come from for this business?

David Kaminer: [00:01:17] Sure. So I started baking as a job in high school. And even as a child, I was really into food.

So, after high school, I went to culinary school in Pittsburgh where I grew up. And, after culinary school, I got my internship and moved to Colorado and worked as a chef and a baker for about 15 years. Total after culinary school and just got loads of experience working in really large scale bakeries that, we were producing, 40,000 loaves of bread a day.

And, although it was great experience, I was starting to get kind of burnt out. You know, I was working 60, 70 hour work weeks and, I was neglecting myself and my family and ultimately, I don't know how much longer I had it in me to keep it up. And that's, uh, that's when, I started doing some research about maybe doing my own business, starting something that, I truly was passionate about.

And, I found out about the cottage food law and ultimately you know, I started doing my research and I was like, this could be a way to get a better balance in my life. And after some research and, some conversations with some friends and whatnot, I decided to give it a shot and, converted my little shop space into a bakery and, took it from there. Ultimately, I did, I didn't have too much business experience, to be honest with you. But managing bakeries and, kitchens and stuff, I learned a lot about food costing and, all those sorts of things. And

so that's kind of how I based everything off of was my chef experience and I was like, well, if my inventory's in check and you know, I've got really small inputs, you know, you don't always have to sell the most amount of something to make a decent living.

So, yeah. I've just been working at it for five years now. I'm still learning, but that's how it works. I feel like.

David Crabill: [00:03:16] Yeah. Well, and it's fascinating because most people do the opposite, right? They go from a cottage food business into, they want to move into a commercial business. So you've gone the opposite direction, right? You worked in a commercial business, obviously it wasn't your own business, and then went back to a cottage food business.

So you can provide a little bit of perspective here for people that maybe don't know what it's like on the inside of a commercial bakery like that. I mean, what does it take to make 40,000 loaves of bread a day? I mean, it sounds like a factory.

David Kaminer: [00:03:49] It is, it was a, a 10,000 square foot facility at the time. And, we had gigantic spiral mixers and, we had three very large ovens and altogether they could hold around. 500 loaves at a time, and you, do that so many times throughout a day, it starts to multiply pretty quickly. But I would say we had about a staff of about, 10 bakers on at all times, and then we had packing staff and delivery drivers and a whole sales team. And, um, so it was a 24/7 operation. And while I was working that job, I started out, working on the bench, just, shaping bread, for 10 hours a day, pretty much.

And then, you know, as you get better and improve, you're able to kind of move through the other stages of the facility and the bakery. And, I was at this place, it's called [Udi's bakery](#) out here. I was there for about five years and I worked my way up to assistant production manager, and I was also the, HACCP coordinator and the food safety manager At that point. So, all sorts of experience, from lot tracking and managing, you know, a staff of ultimately, 10 bakers at a time. And, it was pretty nonstop. Like, on my days off, I would, be nervous to not have my phone because there's always things that needed consulting or things that you needed to do to make sure you had enough bread for the next day.

So, calls at ungodly hours of the night, and it just wore on me after awhile. And for me, I love making bread and, uh, I didn't want to stop that, which is why I probably neglected myself so much, but ultimately it was, you know, that kind of experience gave me the tools I have to really be successful in this environment because, you understand how to solve problems more and, minimize mistakes and be more efficient.

David Crabill: [00:05:49] So this kind of a complex question. I want you to imagine if you went back to when you got out of culinary school and just think of if you, say the cottage food laws existed at the time, let's just say you decided to jump right into your own bakery as a cottage food producer instead of going through the process of working at a commercial bakery for quite some time. I just want to compare and contrast what you maybe did differently having had all that experience at a bakery when you started your cottage food

business and what you might not have done when you would have started straight out of culinary school.

David Kaminer: [00:06:26] Sure. I only make sourdough bread. It just takes a long time to learn. So ultimately, number one would be the bread wouldn't have been as good cause I ultimately didn't know, my desired product. I think that's the hardest part. If you're new to a food service type of a job or business, knowing what people want is half the battle sometimes, and being able to, know, what people want right off the bat just kind of, gives you, a faster, Market, essentially. So, that would have been the first thing. I know my bread wouldn't have looked nearly as good, number one.

And ultimately I wouldn't have known what equipment I needed. Um, uh, I wouldn't have understood food costing and, ultimately had to manage a day and schedule a production day. Those things would have ultimately been really hard things to learn right out of culinary school.

So, know I wouldn't have been as successful had I just went for it. Just because experience is the most important thing I think in bread specifically and in food service, cause it's a lot of hard work and it takes a few years for someone to really learn how dedicated they need to be to their product, and then to streamline it to where you can get a good life balance out of it. Which was my ultimate goal with my cottage food was, keeping my life balanced and making sure I'm taking care of myself and my loved ones.

So, without the struggles that I've had in those hard long days, I don't think I'd be as well grounded in the business either. Because, you know, oftentimes, oftentimes people request a lot of things, and, I feel like, had I been young, I would've probably over committed myself real early and been able, been unable to deliver, what I promise to the customer

David Crabill: [00:08:19] What's an example of, things that people maybe overreach when they ask?

David Kaminer: [00:08:24] Sure. Like participating in, farmer's markets and stuff. Those sort of things. There's a lot of farmer's markets that happen and, you know, as an individual, one man operation that can be hard to manage. You know, if you sign up for multiple markets, maybe you think you can do it, but, you know, I learned my limits in those years of long production. So, I've learned how to say no, I think, which is an important thing in business sometimes.

David Crabill: [00:08:54] In Colorado, can you hire somebody to manage the market for you?

David Kaminer: [00:08:59] You can, yeah, you can. They call it a, uh, informed representative. So somebody that knows about the product and can understand the nature of your business as well.

David Crabill: [00:09:10] and have you leveraged that to sell more bread?

David Kaminer: [00:09:13] No, I mean, do, one farmer's market a summer, and then I've had these two bake days since the beginning of it all.

And I've just really focused on maximizing those bake days. Not only has it allowed me to kind of grow slow, but, it's also allowed me to be efficient and maintain the lifestyle that I want.

But, summertimes I'm working every single day and probably working just as many hours as I used to in those old jobs. But then winter comes around and your, your life kind of slows down a little bit. So I don't know, the first couple of years were scary, but as time's gone on, I've been able to understand how the season's ebb and flow and also understand how much I need to make to, pay my bills and like I said, maintain that healthy lifestyle.

David Crabill: [00:10:02] I remember when I went there a few years ago and saw your bakery and it just, those loaves of bread looked like little pieces of art. He clearly put a lot of time and effort into each one of them and looked like you had truly perfected your craft. So are most of the sales then coming from people who come directly into your bakery, if they're not happening at markets.

David Kaminer: [00:10:26] Yeah. Right now, on, Fridays, I have about, 80 people that will come and pick up bread from my house. And, uh, right now I'm making around like 300 loaves a week.

David Crabill: [00:10:39] And what is the pricing...

David Kaminer: [00:10:41] Pricing. Um, so \$6.50 is what I charged for a 700 gram boule or batard. And then I have baguettes that I sell for \$4. I have, uh, a rotating pan loaf that I charge \$7 for. And then I also make pretzel rolls, which I sell for a dollar each or six for \$5.

So I think it's very comparable to the high quality bread you can get in the store. So if you go buy like killer Dave's bread, right? That's all organic ingredients and you know, oh, it's all whole grain and his bread is actually more expensive than mine in the store. So, it's kind of market price for, artisan bread and I find some people think that I should charge more for it sometimes. So, I think I'm right in the right in the sweet spot.

David Crabill: [00:11:33] So I was wondering if you, had all this experience at a commercial bakery and that really helped shape the direction of your cottage food business, is that something that you would recommend if somebody is trying to start a cottage food business and they have no experience in the food industry, would you think that they'd be better off joining a commercial bakery or something like that before starting a cottage food business.

David Kaminer: [00:11:56] I think it depends on how much they want to grow their business. I would say some people aren't as ambitious with their business. But if you do want to be successful, I feel like learning from hands on experience is invaluable.

if you can even get, working for a week and someplace that you really like, go and asking bakery in town or, whatever business your business model is, and spending time with those people you can learn so much about uh, just being efficient.

And I think those are the things that are, what being successful in business is all about. I dunno, I took this, just to get off on a little sidetrack. I took this business plan boot camp class whenever I first started the business. And one of the first things they tell you is time is your most valuable resource.

So the more time you can save the more potential you have time for making more sales, or potentially, spending time with your children. Whatever your desires may be. So, yeah, working in a professional establishment, can just teach you so much.

So I would definitely recommend that people seek out those opportunities.

David Crabill: [00:13:07] Yeah. Because you worked there for 15 years, right? But I assume you'd be able to get a lot of that information that you gained in a shorter time period. You had mentioned a week, but, what do you think, how long do you think you would have had to work in a commercial establishment to have most of the knowledge that you gained over the course of 15 years?

David Kaminer: [00:13:27] Oh, I don't know. Well, they were different. So I'd only worked in bakeries for about half that time, and the other half was restaurants. I think working in the restaurant taught me that I wanted to work in a bakery, number one.

Just managing people is another thing that I learned. But I don't know. I would say at least a year, just because with bread there's so many variables and as the seasons change, so can the process. So being able to see those variations and how the Baker might solve problems, you know, you're not going to be able to find those things out, on your own and if you do, you're gonna find out the hard way and probably might end up wasting some, some ingredients in the process.

so I would say at least a year, if you can swing it.

David Crabill: [00:14:17] So can you walk us through the process of what it looks like to craft your bread? I mean, from the starter to the actual finished product? What does it look like inside your bakery to go from beginning to end of that process?

David Kaminer: [00:14:32] Yeah. I think, you know, obviously you got to start with, ingredients first. I think, um, as a business, you know, you kind of need to define that early on. Like, I wanted to use all organic ingredients. So, I start there and then ultimately find who can you get those ingredients from? Hopefully you get a wholesale tax license and you can buy ingredients for wholesale costs and, then you can start working with larger distributors and saving yourself money. And also, I think just getting a little bit more a handle on the supply chain. I mill about half the flour I use in house. I've got a eight inch stone mill and another smaller one.

And so, I can just start you from like today. Today will be a mill day and a starter building day. So, uh, this morning I built my starter, I'm milled, some of the flour I'll need. And I'll kind of do that throughout the day. And then this evening I'll be getting my production sheet into in order and I'll be milling more flour.

I'll be building my starter again, and then, tomorrow will be a mix day. Most of my breads are pretty simple. Everything's just flour, water and salt, and the starter, and sometimes I use seeds and dried fruits and some of the breads. But they're all, different combinations of, basically the same thing, which is flour, water, salt and starter.

So the mixing process takes about, five to six hours from when you're initially putting water and flour together. And then, you know, there's a lot of little steps in between. You're waiting and prepping stuff for later, stamping bags, you know, all those little things, throughout the day to kind of fill the time.

And, meanwhile the dough is fermenting and, I have a few different breads, so they each kind of have a different process. Some of them are, shaped that same day. Some of them the doughs are actually put into a refrigerator overnight, in a tub, and then will be shaped, the morning of the bake day.

But, between mixing and shaping and some of the refrigeration, you're just kind of moving buckets of dough around and baskets of dough around. And, uh, also during that time, I'm firing the oven. So, you bring it up to well over the temperature that you needed for baking.

I would say anywhere from 900 to 1200 degrees on the inside. And, that takes about six hours too, so that lines up pretty well with, the mixing process. And after that, I seal up the oven and in the meantime, most of the doughs are in the refrigerator and you're kinda just doing little things as time goes on.

And then on Friday, I wake up and it depends on the day. Sometimes I have this whole grain rye bread, which I'll mix the morning of. Sometimes I'll shape pan loaves and it just depends on which week I'm in my bread cycle. And then you just start staging the bread through the oven. The oven is ultimately always falling in temperature.

So, all that stored heat is what bakes the bread. So, throughout the process your, certain breads can go on first and then you're just kind of riding out the oven and hopefully everything's ready, uh, and proofed the appropriate amount and it doesn't give you any bottlenecks and you don't end up with any ugly bread.

But, it's been a lot of learning curve, I would say even now, it's been about five years like I said. I'm still learning more efficient ways or, better ways to do things.

So, every day is kind of different to be honest. And, uh, even though it's seems very routine to me, there's always variables and, I think that's what I really like about the process is that it's always changing and it is, very much, an artistic process, I would say. and even though you think you may have had a bad day, the customer's don't ever seem to mind.

And then on Friday will be my retail day. So I'll bake everything the morning of and open up at 10:00 AM.

David Crabill: [00:18:52] Quite the process.

David Kaminer: [00:18:54] Right. It's a lot of little steps, you know? And then finding the ideal times to work and then finding the ideal times to spend time with your family.

So, there's a lot of gaps in the process. And I kind of do that on purpose just so I can work efficiently and, and maximize my day. Whether it be baking or trying to do something nice with my family.

David Crabill: [00:19:20] I'd like to hear a little more about your pizza oven. I mean, it's built right into your kitchen. Is that something that you built or did it come with the house or how did that all work out?

David Kaminer: [00:19:29] Yeah. Yeah. That was definitely my crazy idea. I was working at the last, I say my last real job. and it was kind of recently after I found out about the cottage food act, and I came home and I was like, well, what if I built an oven? There's two buildings on the property. And initially we were renting the front and the back was an apartment. And long story short, we ended up buying the house and always just had this extra space that, we didn't really utilize.

And then after I found out about the cottage food law, you know, I just started, potentially seeking my options and, um, I decided to build an oven on our property, which was a crazy undertaking.

I'm not, you know, I wouldn't say I think I'm handy, but, I learned a whole lot of skills. It was definitely a community. I didn't build it myself. I had some help and, you know, it came together as the time went on. I would say I didn't necessarily have the perfect plan in place but it all came together and, it's been working.

I would say it hasn't always been the most ideal thing. There's a lot of, a lot of things that I've seen that other people are doing that maybe had I, known about prior I may have done some other things, but I feel like you know, using the tools that you have and making the best of them is, uh, the best choice oftentimes.

David Crabill: [00:20:52] Well, sometimes people ask me about, whether they can use a brick or a pizza oven for their cottage food business and most of the pizza ovens I've seen are outside as standalone ovens. Did you think about building one outside like that? Or is it actually a requirement to have it connected to the kitchen?

David Kaminer: [00:21:12] No, actually had, I done it again I probably would have put it on a trailer, just because then it's more of a business asset, and I mean, it's great. I definitely love the current situation. There's some pros to the current situation, but I feel like I would have probably put it on a trailer if I was to do it again.

Yeah, there wasn't any necessarily, uh, many requirements. You know, with bread, it's a pretty safe product. So ultimately, they just understand the nature of the product where, there's no pH testing like there is for a lot of the canned goods.

But, I mean ultimately with my food service background, I knew, I'm just been trying to follow all the standard good manufacturing practices and stuff.

David Crabill: [00:21:56] Yeah, no, definitely. Bread is a very, very, very safe item, especially a sourdough one, which is mostly a water and flour. So did you ever consider moving beyond

just the sourdough? I mean, you're really hyper niched in just making one kind of bread, but have you thought about selling other kinds of bread or are you just not interested?

David Kaminer: [00:22:17] Well, I feel like part of it is the health aspects. You know, I feel like, a lot of bread that is commercially made, uh, and using commercial yeast does not agree with people as well. And what I've found is a lot of people do have intolerances to wheat. Not necessarily the celiac, but, I don't know.

I truly believe that, grain should be fermented before we consume it. So, I feel like if we eat like a cookie or something like that, it is a treat

I feel like sourdough is ultimately healthier for people. So that's a big part of my mission is, changing people's perspective on what sourdough bread is.

And, I think just knowing that it's healthier for people, is a big selling point. And oftentimes, I feel like people are seeking out sourdough bread. And, I feel like that's part of my niche is that I, everybody who buys bread for me knows that I use fresh milled flour and I make sourdough.

So, they're confident, and how their body's going to respond to the food. So it's kind of the part of the mission ultimately is to, give people healthy food. So, I think that's what it's rooted in for me.

David Crabill: [00:23:34] do you know what the science is? Like what is it about the fermentation process that changes the grain?

David Kaminer: [00:23:42] Yeah. Sure. So what happens in fermentation is, once you add water to that grain, there's enzymes present in the grain that start to break down the starch. And, the starch is then converted into simpler sugars, and the yeast and bacteria can then consume, those things. so what happens with fermentation is those yeast and bacteria, your sourdough fermentation, in particular, they break down that starch and allow for your body to be able to digest it easier and also absorb more of the nutrients that are present in the grain.

So whereas if you were to make like a cookie, all you're doing is, you're not breaking down any of that starch. So that's why people often get glycemic index spikes because you know, you're eating pretty much what is, sugar essentially.

I like to compare it to, um, like you think about other animals that eat grass, like cows. They have four stomachs and I ultimately think, that those grasses are fermenting in those stomachs. And then by the time they hit their intestines, they're broken down enough and the cows can then get nutrition out of them. But, humans have a lot simpler digestive systems and, we need to, process our food appropriately, to maximize the nutritional benefits.

David Crabill: [00:25:06] Well, you certainly know your stuff when it comes to bread. So do you feel like your home kitchen is limited your business at all?

David Kaminer: [00:25:14] Yes. I think in positive ways too, like right now, I feel like making 300 loaves of bread a week is enough for my needs and for my family's needs. Setting a comfortable limit for yourself can be a valuable thing. But it is challenging just because if I had a bigger oven, I could make the same amount of bread in a really short, shorter amount of time.

But, I dunno. It's limiting and it can be stressful. But, um, I don't see it as a drawback. Sometimes I feel like that limit should be your goal. Like, can you reach that limit, or how do you define that limit too? I feel like, two years ago, if, you know, you told me I was going to make 200 loaves of bread on one day on a Friday, I'd be like yeah, I couldn't do that. The oven's not big enough and I would have made all sorts of excuses. And, here I am today knowing that I, I can physically do that. So, I feel like you know, you define your own limits oftentimes. Right? And, I feel like this cottage food business has, taught me to push those limits and, uh, get a little bit more creative in order to maximize that, you know, what you do have. I feel like that's the hardest thing is with cottage food is you're so small, and initially it feels like you're not making any money and you're wondering how you're going to make it work.

And, as long as you kind of stay on that path, you know, you set some goals and understand how many, pieces of whatever it is you're making you need to, be comfortable or at least to make your business profitable. You know, you start there.

David Crabill: [00:26:56] Yeah. Well, it sounds like you're getting the most out of your oven space for sure.

David Kaminer: [00:27:01] Yeah. You know, those are the things, right? You just got to keep um, what I have this, it's just a Google form that people fill out to order bread for me. And, it's not the most, easiest system to manage just because people can't actually purchase anything online.

And, you can't really set limits, on inventory, right? So, these last few weeks, I'm like, alright, I still got some room. And then, you know, before you know it, you've got 10 more people who fill it out, and you're like, alright, this is more bread than I thought I could make. But ultimately I feel for me, I'm forced to give it a shot. You know, like what's the worst that can happen?

David Crabill: [00:27:40] So you're using a Google form to collect orders. Why aren't you using like a website system to... You can't collect, can you not collect money through the web for Colorado?

David Kaminer: [00:27:54] we can, it's just the way my order form works. So, I've looked into setting it up. I've got square, but there'd be so many categories, cause the breads aren't the same every week, it's just, I haven't figured out how to lay it out on that system to where it would make sense the way I want it to, to be honest. And I've been working with the Google form for, four years now, and I'm comfortable with it. But it could help for the transaction if people were able to buy things online, and actually complete their order online.

But it's tough cause since I make, different breads every week, you just need so many items that you'd constantly have to be updating. I guess that's pretty much it. And as much as I do like computers, I'm not afraid of technology or anything like that, but, it just works so I don't, I haven't switched ultimately.

David Crabill: [00:28:46] Yeah. Well I was asking, cause your website's set up pretty nicely so it's kind of a little surprising that you're using a Google form, but it sounds like it works for you and that's ultimately the most important thing. So do you send out an email every week asking people to fill out that Google form.

David Kaminer: [00:29:03] I actually just do like a monthly newsletter and, that has the new form. The form always goes for five weeks, and it always has the different breads rotating throughout the five weeks, I've pretty much kept them the same, more or less throughout the last four years, I'd say. But, uh, yeah, people expect it.

The bakery bulletin is what I call it, and it just tells people where I'll be in the next coming month, I would say the hardest thing is a cottage food business is, not showing up to something, right?

So, if you've committed to something for me, I've been selling out of my house on Fridays for this entire time, five years, and also I've been at the brewery, every Monday. And when you don't show up, you know, it's hard to get the word out oftentimes. so, and a newsletter is probably one of the top three things of my success is just communicating with your customers and, giving them, an easy thing to expect, so that way they can stay on your schedule.

David Crabill: [00:30:09] I'm just curious, have you noticed or tracked whether when you send out that monthly newsletter, if the orders are highest on that following Friday, and do they trickle off until your next newsletter or are they pretty constant no matter which week it is.

David Kaminer: [00:30:25] I would say at this point, it is kind of constant. A lot of people will sign up for all five weeks, all at once. Some people sign up as they go. What's nice about the form is it's always up and as long as you submit your order, 48 hours in advance, you're guaranteed to get your bread.

David Crabill: [00:30:45] you just mentioned that you sell on Saturdays at a brewery. Can you talk a little bit about how that works?

David Kaminer: [00:30:53] Yeah. So the brewery, I have the same items available uh, at the brewery as I do on my retail Friday. And, I'm there every Monday from four to 7:00 PM. I send out a reminder email the night before for people to come pick up. And, yeah, it's just distribution at this point.

I'm trying to be preorder only, but, yeah, the brewery just hosts me. I go and set up a table. People come pick up their bread. And how that started is actually they were doing a, um, the brewery was hosting a Christmas farmer's market and I had reached out to them.

And asked if they had space and you know. Sure enough they did. And, that's kind of how that relationship started. And after that day, I talked to the manager and I was like, well, what do you think if I started coming, once a week, every single week. And, they were like, sure.

You know, we love, we're all about community here. And, they've, been hosting me for over four years now on Mondays.

David Crabill: [00:31:56] And the unique thing about this is like Colorado doesn't allow indirect sales, right? So you're, you're actually there in person to deliver people's bread. And that's kind of unique.

David Kaminer: [00:32:07] Yeah, exactly. And I think that's part of my success too, is, you know, I'm, I love talking to people and, I feel like that's people like to know the story behind the food they eat oftentimes, and showing up every week and being dedicated makes the marketing a lot easier.

I would say initially, marketing myself was really challenging. You know, I signed up for all the social media stuff and, you know, I got my email list going and initially I invested in a logo and some branding stuff, but I would say all that stuff is good, but, you know, showing up consistently is the most valuable market marketing tool you can ever have. Just because people expect you to be there. And sure enough, I've seen the same faces weekend and week out since I've started. And as you go on, you know, you meet new people and your customer base grows and, obviously some people come and go. But there's a lot of people that have supported me from day one that are still buying bread from me every single week.

And you know, they're my friends. And it's a, it's a wonderful thing to be able to converse with them and be a part of their life and feed them good food.

David Crabill: [00:33:18] You said that you have about 80 people who come every week. I was just wondering how that has changed over the last few years how maybe it compared to a year ago versus a few years ago and how you see it's growing right now.

David Kaminer: [00:33:32] Sure. So when I started, I was still working at my last job and, I would open up on Mondays and, just try to put the word out. But that first time I'd make like 25 loaves every single Monday, and that was it.

And then it took me about a year to get the Google form, organized cause otherwise a lot of it was manual orders. You know, I was still defining my product line at that point,

So that was about six months. I was just doing those Mondays. And then I started my first farmer's market. And I feel like that definitely was also a really important marketing tool. not only do you meet a lot of people, but you sell more bread, um, yeah. And then it just kind of just slowly kept growing. And now actually in the past eight weeks I've been actually making close to double what I normally make on a Friday.

So I would just say in January, for example, I would probably make about, 80 to 90 pieces on a Friday. And now as I said, I'm making close to like 180 pieces on a Friday. And that's just, in two months time.

David Crabill: [00:34:47] And is that all because of the coronavirus thing that's happened.

David Kaminer: [00:34:52] I feel like that's part of it. There's people are definitely, they have more time to think about things and, seeking out good food seems to be one of the things that people are choosing to do with their time. And for me too, I'm kind of hard to shop from.

I mean, I only have that window to pick up on Monday and then open for eight hours on Friday. And, that's a hard sell for a lot of people these days. So with the people having time, they're able to make special trips and go find special things. And I feel like that's a big part of it.

David Crabill: [00:35:26] Yeah. Well, I have heard that a number of bread bakers in this coronavirus pandemic have been busier than ever for whatever reason. You know, the people are seeking out the bread.

David Kaminer: [00:35:37] Yeah, that's what I heard. And now I'm getting like, people are, can't find yeast. They can't find flour. The supply chain's a little backwards right now, right? I think in the United States, what is it?

Something like people eat out 50% of the time or something like that. You know, so now that the restaurants aren't supplying that food to their customers, the food's there. It's just isn't, as accessible because it's taking a different pathway to get to the consumer.

David Crabill: [00:36:06] So somebody who's starting out at home and baking, if they're wanting to start a bread business like yours, what would you say is a good first step for them? Or what kind of person do you think would be fitting for a bread business?

David Kaminer: [00:36:23] What's so nice about the cottage food law is you have the opportunity to start small. And prior to cottage food laws existing, if I wanted to open up a bakery, I'd be,

a quarter of a million dollars in before I could even produce my first loaf of bread, you know, you could start making six loaves a week and trying to sell them on the weekends while you're working your normal job and then see how it goes.

I feel like as long as you, you love making bread and you're comfortable charging people for it. And you understand the value of your time, you can make a go at it pretty easily. For me, it was, starting like that, just seeing if I could potentially ramp this up.

So I feel like as long as you're, you're ambitious and you love making bread, you can pull off a cottage food business almost at any scale.

And, uh, it just all depends on defining how much you need, and if it's worth your time.

David Crabill: [00:37:23] Well, David, I have to ask, you know, you went from a commercial operation to a cottage food operation. Do you ever have any ambitions of scaling out of your kitchen at some point and doing a bakery of your own?

David Kaminer: [00:37:38] Always actually, I've had quite a few ideas of how if I was to expand what that might look like over the years, but, the more I think about it, I'm comfortable and I'm happy and it's hard to hard to deny that. But, going back to when you said his cottage food limiting, and one of the ways that it is limiting, for someone like me is, you know, a lot of my goals happen to, uh, happen to deal with, the local grain economy and like the big picture of, our agricultural system and where our ingredients come from.

Because I'm so small, I don't make as big of an impact on the grain economy as I'd like to. So, a farmer wouldn't say, grow a crop of wheat for me because I'm too small.

So, um, you know, I would say one of the hard things about being a cottage food producer is, even though I'm home with my family, there is a lot of isolation time of me just baking by myself and coming from the food service industry. You're always surrounded by people and you're talking all day.

And I really, I always enjoyed that part of. Food service and I don't get that anymore. but I am fortunate that I get to see my customers every week, and you know, that's my community that I get to converse with . But I always have dreams of more, but I'm trying to, uh, always reel it in and put it into a comfortable perspective of what that might do to my life.

David Crabill: [00:39:07] I did want to ask about Colorado's cottage food law and the restrictions and specifically about a very unique restriction that only pertains to Colorado in the sales limit where they allow I believe \$10,000 of sales per year per product.

I think it's the only per product restriction out there. Is that something that you think about or has that affected the way you do anything.

David Kaminer: [00:39:35] I definitely think about it, the way they define a product is an individual product with, a designated name. Right. So even though my breads are made up of similar ingredients, sometimes they are containing different, like seeds or different grains or flours.

My country bread is one product and then I've got a flax seed, which is another product. And, because of the diversity of my product line, I haven't, came near that cap actually.

David Crabill: [00:40:08] Yeah, that's what I basically figured. And that's kind of the interesting thing about that limitation is that it's not that limited. Right? Because there are so many ways that you can tweak the flavor of something or change this or change that and come up with a different product.

David Kaminer: [00:40:25] Yeah. I was at quite a few of the stakeholder meetings initially, and I don't even really remember spending too much time on that. I dunno. Like I said, I feel

like Colorado's law is pretty vague, honestly. I feel like they leave it vague on purpose sometimes, just so that way they are able to just use some discretion in certain cases.

Although I did run into something interesting last summer just to touch on. so I was doing my farmer's market, at union station and we had the health inspectors come through and they, you know, have, they do routine inspections at least once a year. You get them at the farmer's markets. So at my farmer's markets, I wouldn't actually pre-bag all the items.

I had like a sneeze guard and I'd use gloves and tongs and, um, but the, the way it's defined, in the act is, it says, items must be bagged prior to sale. So I interpreted that as, okay, well, I can have my really nice, beautiful bread display, and, people can pick out their bread. And that was ultimately the goal is to bring people in with the bread display.

And, I did that for about four and a half years, I had the same exact farmer's market stand. I never got any problems from, health inspectors. And, this past summer I had an inspection. And, the inspector was like, well, everything needs to be pre-packaged. And, uh, I tried to explain to him like what I've been doing, and I've been doing this for so many these many years. And he wanted to cease and desist me on the spot at the market. And, I was able to plead with him and let him allow me to stay for that market. And, and then for all the consecutive markets, I was bagging everything at home and I completely, you know, adjusted according to their request. And you know, I got reinspected and everything was fine, but it's certain things like that that aren't as clearly defined. And, you know, for me it was like heart stopping to be at the market after, you know, I've spent three days making the bread and you know, you're running your butt off to get down there and you know, to find out that, you know, this guy wants to shut you down after you've been doing this for so many years.

So I just started bagging the bread and ultimately I thought it was going to affect sales, but it didn't end up having any effect on the sales.

I actually found that it saved me time at the market too. Cause you're not. You know, you could go through more customers more efficiently cause there's not as many pieces to the transaction, but yeah.

You know, and ultimately they were really helpful in working with me. And, you know, we'd gone back and forth with some of the language in the law and I was like, all right, it's fine. It's not a big deal. I'm still selling the bread and I'm able to be here, and I'm grateful for that. But those are all the fun things that you learn throughout the process.

David Crabill: [00:43:17] Is there any positive story that comes to mind that you can think of that's happened in the last five years.

David Kaminer: [00:43:25] Well, yeah, sure. One of the things that, this has opened up, as I've done this is I've been fortunate to do some teaching. And, uh, one of my long-term customers is a science teacher at the elementary school that's down the street from me. So these last couple of years, we've been actually teaching, the preschool group about bread and flour. We're calling it bread lab. So yeah, I'm able to teach these little four year olds,

about bread. I bring, I've got a little tabletop mill and I bring in wheat berries and talk all about flour and sourdough starter. And, uh, then we, get their hands dirty, mixing dough.

And I wear all my chef gear with the funny hat and everything like that. I don't know, the more I do this, the more of those teaching opportunities. I kind of jump on and, um, I've had the opportunity to do a lot of cool things. Just, uh, from opening this little cottage food business, I feel like if I was working for somebody, you never get the time to uh, explore those types of opportunities. So, yeah, I've had some pretty cool teaching opportunities that I've really enjoyed doing.

David Crabill: [00:44:43] and I know that you do workshops as well for adults, I believe. Can you share a little bit about that?

David Kaminer: [00:44:50] Yeah, sure. So, um, I started doing workshops. Uh, I would say it was about three years ago. Initially it was kind of a way to generate some initial revenue in the off months. So when I don't have farmer's markets. I host people in my home, in my little bake shop, and we do, I do a six hour bread workshop.

And, everybody mixes their own dough. And then, um, the participants take home unbaked loaves and then they're to bake them in their home the next day. So, they really kind of are forced to do the entire process from start to finish. And, I've found I've had quite a lot of people that have, gone on to become bread freaks, after taking my class.

So, it's been a lot of fun. And now it is, it is still kind of a good revenue generator in the slow months. I think I was gonna do eight of them this year. I, unfortunately, I had to cancel two due to the current restrictions.

David Crabill: [00:45:51] And how much are you charging for a six hour class?

David Kaminer: [00:45:54] So I charge \$150 for a six hour class, and I have six people at a time.

David Crabill: [00:46:00] Yeah, that's, that's pretty good.

David Kaminer: [00:46:03] Yeah. Yeah. You know, it took a, took a few trial runs, I would say to really kind of fine tune it. But, now it's, you know, after I've probably hosted, probably close to like 30 workshops over the years. And, yeah, now that they're more refined, it's a little bit more routine.

I feel a lot of bread workshops, or just even food workshops in general. There's a lot of what I call TV magic, right? Where you go in and something's partially done and you don't actually get to see a part of the process. And, you know, because like I said, I make people do the whole process.

Oftentimes I find that it's my customers that are oftentimes I'm teaching to make bread, which you might find as a little, uh, counterproductive. But, it makes them appreciate it a lot.

So they're like, wow, that's a lot of work. I'm going to just let you do it.

David Crabill: [00:46:58] Well, David, uh, we've been talking for a while now, and, uh, before we wrap up this interview, I just wanted to have you tell people where they can find you or reach out to you.

David Kaminer: [00:47:10] Sure. My website is raleighstreetbakery.com. And my email is david@raleighstreetbakery.com. And, uh, yeah, that's the best way to find me. I'm on, [Instagram](#) and, [Facebook](#) I'm not as good at. But yeah, you can find me there for sure. That's probably the best way to reach me.

David Crabill: [00:47:32] Sounds great. Well, thanks so much for sharing with us today.

David Kaminer: [00:47:35] Of course. Thanks for having me.

David Crabill: [00:47:39] That wraps up the eighth episode of the Forrager podcast. David is certainly a master of his craft and it's clear that his consistency and love for bread baking have contributed to his success.

If you are thinking about starting a cottage food business of your own, head on over to forrager.com to [check out your state's cottage food law](#).

For more information on this episode, go to forrager.com/podcast/8. Thanks for listening and I'll see you in the next episode.