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A Kitchen In France: A Year Of Cooking In My Farmhouse



Synopsis

With beguiling recipes and sumptuous photography, *A Kitchen in France* transports readers to the French countryside and marks the debut of a captivating new voice in cooking. When Mimi Thorisson and her family moved from Paris to a small town in out-of-the-way MÃ©doc, she did not quite know what was in store for them. She found wonderful ingredientsâfrom local farmers and the neighboring woodsâand, most important, time to cook. Her cookbook chronicles the familyâs seasonal meals and life in an old farmhouse, all photographed by her husband, Oddur. Mimiâs convivial recipesâsuch as Roast Chicken with Herbs and CrÃªme FraÃ¢che, CÃ¢pe and Parsley Tartlets, Winter Vegetable Cocotte, Apple Tart with Orange Flower Water, and Salted Butter CrÃªme Caramelâwill bring the warmth of rural France into your home.

Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Clarkson Potter; 1st Edition edition (October 28, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 080418559X

ISBN-13: 978-0804185592

Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 1.4 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (199 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #14,827 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > French #20 inÂ Books > Travel > Europe > France > General #24 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Entertaining & Holidays > Seasonal

Customer Reviews

I first discovered Mimi's blog, Manger, about a year ago when I was searching for a cherry clafoutis recipe. Ever since, I have been a faithful follower and couldn't be more excited when she announced that her book was coming soon. If you're a follower of the blog, you'll see her seasonal, unfussy approach to French home cooking reflected in this book. At first glance, I was afraid most of the recipes were a little more involved since I had limited experience with French cooking. Having made some dishes from her blog before, I decided to peruse the book a few times before marking recipes that I was ready to take on. So far, I have made these dishes: crepes with salted butter caramel (simple but delicious, you don't need a crepe pan) fava bean soup (I'll skip the mint next time) roast chicken with creme fraiche (amazing, I found that rubbing salt and pepper on the chicken

first before rubbing the creme fraiche gave me better result, pair it with roasted potato for a complete meal)pan-seared chicken breast with spring onions (I wasn't too excited about this one, kind of bland compared to her other chicken dishes)tomato tart (if you're short on time, use store-bought crust. The crust got a little soggy so make sure to add extra flour at the bottom to absorb liquid from tomato)mustard roasted poussins (I used chicken thigh. It's becoming one of my favorite chicken recipes.)butternut gratin (a new recipe for butternut squash, will definitely make this again for Thanksgiving or Christmas)All of the recipes that I have tried so far are well written and not too complicated for a home cook like myself.I would love to try these recipes in the future: coq au vin, duck confit parmentier, anise seed sweetbreads with glazed turnips, bouillabaisse, pistachio sabayon with strawberries and meringues, seared foie gras with grapes and figs, pork cheek raviolis with ceps, calvados and creme fraiche apple tart (would make a great dessert for Thanksgiving or Christmas), garden cake (when berries are in season again), coffee cream puffs, chestnut veloute, salted butter creme caramel, and chestnut ice cream.Other recipes that seem interesting but probably unrealistic for me to hunt down the ingredients would be black locust flower fritters (wouldn't even know where to get these), calves's liver a la bordelaise (need a good butcher shop), and escargots a la bordelaise.This is a wonderful collection of well written recipes from Mimi's kitchen. I truly enjoyed her stories of food, people, and life in the French countryside. Her husband's beautiful photography not only augmented her stories but transported me to Medoc. What makes her even more likeable is her embracement of her Chinese heritage and desire to introduce that to her children. The end of the book features a few recipes that she makes annually for Chinese New Year which I will definitely try since I haven't made anything similar except for wonton soup.My only gripe is thirty percent of the recipes in the book are found on her blog so this book gets 4 stars instead of 5 for the review--something to consider before buying this book. Overall this is a wonderful book for cooks who love French home cooking. This book is inviting, comforting, and full of soul. I was truly inspired to get into the kitchen and start cooking more French dishes.

Eagerly anticipating this book, I poured a glass of wine when it arrived and read it cover to cover. The photographs are gorgeous, Mimi and her family and home are gorgeous. I do wonder, however, how many of the 5 star reviews have actually cooked from the book. How can you give a cookbook a 5 star review if you haven't tried a single recipe? One reviewer claims she loves every recipe in the book--the book was released just last week. I prepared the Onion Tart, the Butternut Squash Gratin and the Roast Chicken with Crème Fraîche and Herbs. I chose these recipes as they seemed most accessible to the home cook. The onion tart was overly sweet and lacked depth of

flavor, the chicken was juicy but bland, and the butternut squash also lacked depth and seemed overly sweet. Mimi says to "slice" the garlic and the shallot for the chicken. Hmmm, look at the picture, the garlic and the shallot are chopped. I followed the recipe to the letter and the shallot was overly cooked while the sliced garlic was distributed unevenly. The food reserves two stars at best, the writing is self-absorbed and repetitive, but the stunning photography prompted me to give three stars. This is after all, foremost a cookbook, right?

This book is truly gorgeous. The combination of how photogenic Mimi Thorisson is, her family, home and the countryside plus the dishes cooked and served on French porcelain with pink roses makes beautiful viewing, page after page. Her husband, Oddur Thorisson is a professional photographer and dog breeder. His eye along with their life together has produced a tome that is more than a cookery book, it is a photographic biography of their lives. Most rare of all is the sincere generosity of her writing, making recipes and their lifestyle accessible. Many reviews online speak of lifestyle envy as though we could aspire to living like they do. I would suggest instead an admiration for people who are so clearly living their passion and doing it with an entourage of seven offspring and terriers too numerous to count. Can you imagine feeding them all? Well, look through this book and you'll see how this is done -- gracefully, with patience and a lot of pure happiness. That's worth taking a look, in and of itself. Reading about the family's arrival in the winter a few years ago, especially the disappearance of two puppies and their desperate search to find them illustrates Thorisson's sensibility about whether the move to the Medoc region was meant for them after all. Her writing reveals her approach to the seasons and how the recipes are meaningful to her, e.g., her Aunt Francine's recipe for fava bean soup and her father disappearing to eat Chinese noodles at a restaurant nearby while waiting for their order to arrive. I love savory souffles and tarts myself so am planning to try her recipe for artichoke souffle very soon. What I have found is that rather than envying the largesse of this family's life in France, this book inspires me to live and cook according to my own passions, right where I am. That's saying a lot for a book that just arrived yesterday.

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