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#### Cook's notes

# Books & cooks



**Sally Hughes**, our cookbook expert, recommends her favourite titles from the new releases



**Tom Aikens Easy** by Tom Aikens (£25,  $Good\ Food\ offer\ price\ £22.50$ , Ebury Press)

Tom is an amazing chef and his recipes have a touch of restaurant style, but this is more neighbourhood bistro, full of can't-live-without favourites. This book shows you how making things yourself is really very easy with a collection of undemanding, but rewarding recipes, such as Salmon baked

with juniper & lemon thyme, right.

Tom's recipes for Tartes fines make preparing a sophisticated pudding really simple. There are also new ideas – for example, turning tuna in a Niçoise salad into a delicious sauce – plus everyday stalwarts including Shepherd's pie, and a really useful chapter on using up leftovers such as cold chicken or cooked pasta.



**Tuscany** by Mario Matassa (£24.95, *Good Food* offer price £22.45, Phaidon)

With outstanding photographs that give a real feel for the location, this book is full of authentic recipes. Divided into sections reflecting the different regions of Tuscany, it gives information on local specialities and festivals alongside recipes.

Tuscan food is perfectly suited to current ways of eating –

Tuscan peasants were foraging long before it became the on-trend thing to do. If you liked *The Silver Spoon*, you will love this collection of Tuscan classics.



**The Skinny French Kitchen** by Harry Eastwood (£20, *Good Food* offer price £18, Bantam Press)

I first encountered Harry's recipes in *Red Velvet Chocolate Heartache*, where she reduced sugar content and considered food intolerances, producing scrumptious cakes by using vegetables. The woman is a genius.

She's now produced this collection of classic French dishes with a reduced calorie count. Her recipes are practical and quick, capturing the essence of the French originals, but without the frightening fat. Try the Coq au vin blanc and the Mousse au chocolat and be amazed.



 $\textbf{Cookery School} \ \ \text{by Richard Corrigan (£20, $Good Food offer price £18, Michael Joseph)}$ 

This book, which accompanies the Channel 4 show, is an easy-to-follow cookery course.

Within the four main chapters (starters, meat, fish and puddings), Richard Corrigan's recipes are divided into beginners, intermediate and advanced. Interspersed are

skills tips from Gizzi Erskine, to help you lift your cooking to that next stage. It would make a great present for someone just starting to cook, but there

It would make a great present for someone just starting to cook, but ther is something to learn for cooks at all levels.

• You can buy all this month's books at a discount. Simply call 01326 569444, p&p is free. Or buy any book online at bbcgoodfood.com/sparkledirect

#### From Tom Aikens Easy

### Salmon baked with juniper & lemon thyme

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 mins • COOK 5 mins Easy

600g salmon fillet 150ml olive oil 20g unsalted butter

- 1 tbsp finely chopped juniper
- 2 tsp lemon thyme leaves juice and finely grated zest of
- 1 Heat oven to 200C/220C fan/gas 6. Place a baking tray in the oven so it gets really hot. Slice the salmon very thinly, carpaccio style, working across the width of the salmon.

  2 Cut 4 x 15cm squares of baking parchment, brush them with olive oil, dot with butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sprinkle half the chopped juniper berries and half the lemon thyme over the parchment squares and lay the salmon slices on top. Season again, drizzle with more



olive oil and the lemon zest, then add the rest of the lemon thyme and chopped juniper. Sprinkle on a little lemon juice.

**3** Place the parchment squares with the salmon on the hot baking tray. Cook for 2-3 mins until the salmon is just done. Take the squares off the tray and flip them over onto plates. Peel back the paper and serve.





#### The Four-Day Cookery School River Cottage HQ, Axminster, Devon (01297 630302, rivercottage.net)

For years, River Cottage has been running one-day courses on subjects such as Bread-making and Pig in a day. Now you can do them all in one belt-busting bonanza, by attending its Four-Day Cookery School.

Naturally, being part of Hugh
Fearnley-Whittingstall's set-up is an
important part of the draw. But you
also learn solid cooking skills. Each
day covers a theme, first meat, then
vegetables, bread, and finishing with
fish. River Cottage is as homely and
earthy as it looks on TV – there's
plenty of offal and you smoke your
own fish, but the staff also spoil you
with indulgent gastronomic treats.

With 20 in the class you don't get much individual attention, but on the

upside, equipment at the two-person work stations is first-rate, plus Hugh turned up for a chat during my visit.

How hands-on? Completely. Hugh's chefs teach their speciality, then it's over to you. Recipes are from Hugh's latest book, River Cottage Everyday, which you take home at the end. I was impressed with the dishes we made using cuts of cheaper meat and veg. Cost At £870, the course is fair value for money, although you need to factor in accommodation on top. The website recommends plenty of places to stay nearby. **Verdict** The pace is just right, balancing heads-down cooking with downtime to savour your efforts - and the magic of Britain's most filmed farmhouse.

e Clare Hargreaves

## Mondale, Tuesdale, Wednesdale, Thursdale, Fridale, Saturdale & Sundale



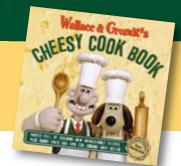
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