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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.



Cookery School 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 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

Cookery school photographs CLARE HARGREAVES, REBECCA WARD

Cook's notes

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 berries
2 tsp lemon thyme leaves
juice and finely grated zest of
1 lemon



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.



COOK SCHOOL ON TEST



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.

Clare Hargreaves

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



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