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Bar Tartine: Techniques & Recipes



Synopsis

Here's a cookbook destined to be talked-about this season, rich in techniques and recipes epitomizing the way we cook and eat now. Bar Tartine—co-founded by Tartine Bakery's Chad Robertson and Elisabeth Prueitt—is obsessed over by locals and visitors, critics and chefs. It is a restaurant that defies categorization, but not description: Everything is made in-house and layered into extraordinarily flavorful food. Helmed by Nick Balla and Cortney Burns, it draws on time-honored processes (such as fermentation, curing, pickling), and a core that runs through the cuisines of Central Europe, Japan, and Scandinavia to deliver a range of dishes from soups to salads, to shared plates and sweets. With more than 150 photographs, this highly anticipated cookbook is a true original.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Winner, 2015 IACP Cookbook Award: Chefs and Restaurants
Winner, 2015 James Beard Cookbook Award: Cooking from a Professional Point of View

Nicolaus Balla and Cortney Burns are the co-chefs and couple behind the beloved San Francisco Mission District eatery Bar Tartine (sister restaurant to Tartine Bakery). They are fiercely loyal to using local produce and to making anything and everything by hand. Nick was born in Michigan but spent some of his childhood in New York, moved to Hungary for part of high school, went to culinary school, and then traveled extensively in Japan while learning to make hand-crafted ingredients. Cortney grew up in Chicago, spending time in Nepal and India studying the Tibetan language and

cultural anthropology. She worked for years cooking in restaurants, spending her free time learning the preservation techniques of past generations from old cookbooks, memoirs, and family histories. They both ended up in San Francisco, drawn by the talent of the chefs and farmers in the Bay Area. Their cooking is a product of the foods they grew up eating with their families in the Midwest and that they have experienced during their travels abroad. Bar Tartine has been featured in Men's Health, USA Today, InStyle, Bon Appétit, Travel + Leisure, Wired, and Food & Wine among other top local and national outlets. Chad Robertson is San Francisco-based cofounder of Tartine Bakery and Bar Tartine, and coauthor of Tartine and author of Tartine Bread and Tartine Book No. 3, which he also photographed.

Reading this book, for me, is akin to a middle-aged, every-other-weekend hiker with an aching knee reading a book about how to climb Mt. Everest. That hiker may really, really enjoy reading that book. And her hiking experiences may allow her to greatly appreciate all of the work that goes into climbing Mt. Everest, but the truth is, she will never, ever climb that mountain! Bar Tartine is a lovely book. The photographs are stunning. The recipes are creative and complex. I might, someday, try one of them. I will not be making any of these recipes anytime soon for a few reasons. As I'm sure the other reviews have mentioned again and again, each recipe calls for one or more ingredients that one must prepare using the techniques section that comprises the first half of the book. These ingredients are brined, pickled, smoked, dried, powdered, smoked, burnt, smoked then powdered...etc. I just do not have enough refrigerator space to devote to 10+ vats of various foods, in various stages of being transformed from simple to delicious. I live in Europe, and the fridges here tend to be small (note to any Europeans reading this, none of the things in this book will fit in your fridge, but if you are a native European, you may be braver than I when it comes to not refrigerating things). Also, only one person that I know in my town owns a gas oven, and it is the kind without a pilot light, so all of those dried food recipes are out. The other thing is, for all of the time spent on techniques, there is very little information about how to use the resulting pickles and powders and sauces, other than in other equally daunting recipes at the end of the book. I might be persuaded to cook heads of garlic at 130F in my rice cooker for 3 WEEKS if there was a list of more than three ways in which I could actually use black garlic. All of that said, I will never climb Mt. Everest, but I do occasionally enjoy reading books about this feat. Hence, 4 stars for an interesting and engaging book about cooking techniques that I will likely never use.

I've had this inspiring, creative food-making guide for about 6 months now and it has yet to be

returned to my cookbook shelves. It's probably the most original cookbook I've ever read and it has become essential in my kitchen. Yet, I wouldn't recommend it to everyone. This is definitely not a beginner's book nor a "what's for dinner tonight" recipe collection. This is a guide to building a pantry of do-it-yourself food additives that will punch flavor into your food. The actual recipes, which are only about half of the book, serve as inspiration for using some of those ingredients you've charred, dehydrated, sprouted, fermented and cultured in the first half of the guide. Of course, homemade garlic powder may at first blush seem a "you've got to be kidding me" directive if you're starting one of the recipes in the second half of the book and see it listed in the ingredients. Well, if you just want to make that particular recipe, you don't have to make the garlic powder; you can easily substitute store-bought. But if it's garlic season and you saw a great deal at the farmer's market and maybe you bought more than you can really use, why not dehydrate some and make powder for future use? I'm slowly adding things to my pantry as I have time and abundance of raw materials. Another reason I wouldn't recommend this book to a beginning cook is that blindly following the recipes may not always yield the best result. Recipes that include a sauce, for example, often yield excessive amounts of sauce. This is a common occurrence in cookbooks from restaurants, probably because the chefs are accustomed to preparing large quantities of sauces for use in multiple dishes. Experienced cooks shouldn't have much trouble estimating the sauce volume and either making a fraction of it or saving the excess for another use. So bottom line, if you're just starting to cook or don't want to spend much time in the kitchen, hold off on this book until one or both of those conditions change. But, say, if you mastered Sally Fallon's Nourishing Traditions years ago and want to be even more intense in the kitchen and truly wow your dinner guests, you will love this book. I sure do.

If you think you know food, get this book and think again. This is the first cookbook to blow my mind in a long time. I've read it cover to cover and am now happily drying my own herbs and spices, fermenting everything from honey to thai chili peppers. I feel like I'm learning about food and cooking all over again. I've purchased for a few friends and they all have the same reaction as me. Highly recommended.

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