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Slow Fires: Mastering New Ways To Braise, Roast, And Grill



Synopsis

The celebrated chef of Upland explores the fundamental techniques of braising, roasting, and grilling--and shows you how to see them in new ways, to learn the rules to break them. The chapters begin with thorough lessons on these basic methods. From there, the recipes evolve to feature variations on the techniques, altering ratios of moisture, intensities of heat, reversing expected processes. Sometimes the techniques are surprising, like braising chicken legs in the juices created by overcrowding a pan of peppers. And sometimes the results are unbelievable, like tender peppercorn-crust short ribs, made by first steaming the ribs before searing them to a spicy crisp. This is a book about delighting in the details, about cooking by hand, about learning to see and smell and touch like a modern master. It's a book you will keep, read, learn, and cook from for years to come.

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Customer Reviews

“Smillie’s learn-the-rules-then-break-them approach • not to mention the promise of his incredibly delicious food • will inspire even slacker cooks to dive in.”
— Grub Street

Chef-partner of the acclaimed Upland in New York City, JUSTIN SMILLIE began his cooking career during his teenage years, quickly ascending through the ranks of NYC landmarks Mercer Kitchen and Gramercy Tavern before becoming the chef of the urban-rustic favorite Barbuto. He was the

chef at Il Buco Alimentari e Vineria, where he won three stars from the New York Times. KITTY GREENWALD is the Slow Fast Food columnist for the Wall Street Journal. She has cooked in Portugal, France, and Italy; had a catering company in New York; contributed to Real Simple magazine; worked with Slow Food Nation; and was a fellow at the Montalvo Arts Center.

It deserves to be said right up front: this is a 4000/5000-level cookbook. If it were a college class, it would be the one with about 15 people in it, mostly exhausted grad students, with the entire grade being an original research project. Attendance will not be graded, and Smillie doesn't care if you have to pull an all-nighter to get it done. That said, damn. This is one great cookbook. Lots of Italian-Mediterranean flavors, but compellingly unique and original in their composition - nontraditional, highly original, cheffed-up, and fascinating. Often the result is sort of a mutated, creative riff on something traditional, like paella or roast chicken or grilled fish, just familiar enough to hit the same spot but often rethought and reconstructed for maximum impact. The recipes are ruthlessly uncompromising in their commitment to technique and often span multiple steps over hours and days, but Smillie is a patient guide, and provides scheduled milestones for recipe completion. The instructions are detailed, and a committed intermediate home cook should do fine - but a breezy, easy cookbook this is not. I find myself raiding this book for flavor pairings, ingredients, and ideas much more often than I actually cook the entire recipes straight through. I've done a few, yes, but my availability doesn't do this book full justice - and I am hardly a slavish recipe-follower in any case. However, as a source of ideas and culinary concepts alone, it's worth the price. I just did some chicken thighs with Smillie's rosemary-anchovy rub, indirect roasted on the grill. I'm sure his full thrice-roasted chicken recipe is better still, but just skimming off the rub and the ideas made for a really great dinner. You may wish to do the same until you have a winter Sunday free to throw yourself in. Either way, I think you'll find it worth it.

This book is perfect for a small intimate dinner between just a few people. The portion sizes are small so not necessarily the cookbook to get if you want to host large parties. But the recipes are beautiful, and the instructions and ingredients easy to follow and understand. I got this book for my husband for his birthday and his two favorite recipes are the ox tail and the grilled lobster. This makes a good gift for any man in your life who enjoy grilling, braising, or roasting. It is unique because the recipes are different from what you might get at a restaurant or see in other cookbooks. Definitely a good buy and one that our tummies are happy with :)

This is not so much of a recipe book as it is a cook book. This book is for information on style and technique. Yes it has recipes, and yes they are amazing, but I think a lot of people who commented were expecting a 'recipe book' that gives you something to do with the item in your fridge, not a cookbook giving you meals and detailing how to prepare them. This takes some very interesting ideas and gives you really fun ways of doing things - like gaffer lime octopus with chickpeas and blistered peppers. I really like the way he explains how to make the meals, and how to do each step of the way. My favorite part, and what is most unique, is the meal planning in the book - broken down into what can be done before (everything from minutes, to hours, to days) and what can be done after the recipe you are currently working with to get the meal you want to the table when you want it there. Also, the photography is fantastic.

I usually get my recipes online, but this is one book one must buy. The recipes are very complicated and most take several days to complete. Some of the recipes include an ingredient that is a recipe in another chapter that also must be prepared in advance over several days. I love that and I have discovered new flavors and skills thanks to this book. I've learned to love fennel and thank you, Justin Smillie, for bringing black garlic into my life.

Fascinating complexity and depth. A great read even if you never cook.

All the meals I've made have been delicious from this book. They do take a bit of prep though so I've had to alter a few to fit my day to day since I don't always have 3 days to plan a meal.

Interesting, Informative and Useful !!! Skills & Experience helpful ... stresses Technique & encourages Creativity !!! Read It, Experiment with the recipes and keep it for reference ...

I don't buy cookbooks anymore - they rarely provide anything innovative. this one is exceptional, between its overarching themes and the individual combinations, it's exquisite.

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