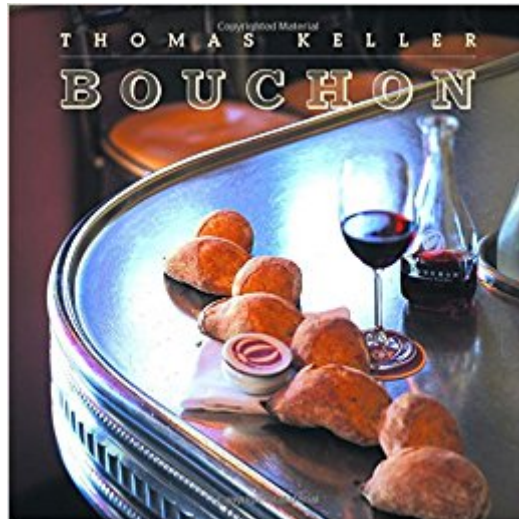


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Bouchon (The Thomas Keller Library)



Synopsis

Thomas Keller, chef/proprietor of Napa Valley's French Laundry, is passionate about bistro cooking. He believes fervently that the real art of cooking lies in elevating to excellence the simplest ingredients; that bistro cooking embodies at once a culinary ethos of generosity, economy, and simplicity; that the techniques at its foundation are profound, and the recipes at its heart have a powerful ability to nourish and please. So enamored is he of this older, more casual type of cooking that he opened the restaurant Bouchon, right next door to the French Laundry, so he could satisfy a craving for a perfectly made quiche, or a gratin'd onion soup, or a simple but irresistible roasted chicken. Now Bouchon, the cookbook, embodies this cuisine in all its sublime simplicity. But let's begin at the real beginning. For Keller, great cooking is all about the virtue of process and attention to detail. Even in the humblest dish, the extra thought is evident, which is why this food tastes so amazing: The onions for the onion soup are caramelized for five hours; lamb cheeks are used for the navarin; basic but essential refinements every step of the way make for the cleanest flavors, the brightest vegetables, the perfect balance—whether of fat to acid for a vinaigrette, of egg to liquid for a custard, of salt to meat for a duck confit. Because versatility as a cook is achieved through learning foundations, Keller and Bouchon executive chef Jeff Cerciello illuminate all the key points of technique along the way: how a two-inch ring makes for a perfect quiche; how to recognize the right hazelnut brown for a brown butter sauce; how far to caramelize sugar for different uses. But learning and refinement aside—oh those recipes! Steamed mussels with saffron, bourride, trout grenobloise with its parsley, lemon, and croutons; steak frites, beef bourguignon, chicken in the pot—all exquisitely crafted. And those immortal desserts: the tarte Tatin, the chocolate mousse, the lemon tart, the profiteroles with chocolate sauce. In Bouchon, you get to experience them in impeccably realized form. This is a book to cherish, with its alluring mix of recipes and the author's knowledge, warmth, and wit: "I find this a hopeful time for the pig," says Keller about our yearning for the flavor that has been bred out of pork. So let your imagination transport you back to the burnished warmth of an old-fashioned French bistro, pull up a stool to the zinc bar or slide into a banquette, and treat yourself to truly great preparations that have not just withstood the vagaries of fashion, but have improved with time. Welcome to Bouchon.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bouchon, chef Thomas Keller's bistro cookbook, offers 180-plus recipes from his eponymous restaurants--there are two. Readers perusing the near-prosciutto-size book will be dazzled, first, by its great looks (there are many beautiful photos), then, perhaps, wonder why so many of its typically homey bistro dishes are so fussy to prepare. Why, for example, must the onions for onion soup be caramelized for five hours, or the muscles of a leg of lamb separated so that each can be cooked to an exact, presumably optimal, temperature. They should, however, trust this justly celebrated chef, whose sometimes-painstaking refinements reflect a better way. Apart from the excellence of the dishes, the reason to own Bouchon is to discover the richness of Keller's technical understanding. Readers learn, for example, not to baste chicken while it roasts, which creates skin-softening moisture, and to allow the base for crÃ"me caramel to sit before baking, thus permitting its flavors to deepen. Keller's sensitivity to ingredients and their composition is profound; and he and his collaborators have presented it so deftly that one finds oneself engrossed again and again. Whether Keller is talking about vinaigrettes (in their balance of fat, acid, and saltiness, the perfect sauce) vegetable glazing, or the creation of brown butter, his insights are fascinating. The dishes cover a wide range of courses, and include the traditional--poule au pot, veal roast, pommes frites, and so on--and the "new," such as Gnocchi with Summer Vegetables, Skate with Fennel-Onion Confit and Tapenade Sauce, and Grandma Sheila's Cheesecake Tart with Huckleberries. All are, as the French might say, impeccable--and can be accomplished by anyone willing to take the time to do so. Like his cooking, Bouchon is a sui generis treat. --Arthur Boehm

Keller's restaurant Bouchon, in Napa Valley, Calif., is modeled after Parisian bistros and serves

simple yet sumptuous fare. This graceful ode to bistro cooking emphasizes that although in America, "bistro" is synonymous with "casual," the food is prepared with "precision of technique brought to bear on ordinary ingredients." Close-up photos of signature dishes are alluring, and several action shots of food preparation may help readers refine their techniques. The book's sections progress from "First Impressions" (hors d'oeuvres and more) to "Anytime" dishes (soups, salads, quiches) to appetizers, entrées and desserts. Thoughtful introductions to each recipe grouping explain Keller's experiences with the featured dishes; sidebars on everything from oil to onions provide insight and useful tidbits. A "Basics" chapter attempts to further demystify the foundations of bistro cooking (it's built on staples like confit, stock and aioli), and a "Sources" section directs readers to bistro-appropriate tools and specialty foods. Of course, as any chef knows, food is as much about experience, memory and emotion as it is about flavor and presentation. Especially bistro food, Keller says, which retains the "spirit of the original bistro, the spirit of embracing you... restoring you and making you happy." This appealing book promises to do the same. Photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

This cookbook is all about traditional French bistro recipes prepared with classic French technique. Chef Keller focuses exclusively on the bistro dishes he makes for Bouchon. If the thought of delving into traditional bistro recipes with exacting techniques, very specific ingredients, and, on occasion, hours or even days of preparation, excites you, then this is the book for you. It's clear that Chef Keller wants us to learn how properly to prepare traditional dishes such as rillettes, terrines, tartines, and, of course, French onion soup. He does not compromise on ingredients: these are traditional dishes. He's a California/NY chef, so he uses a lot of fresh seafood. Some ingredients, such as the freshest seafood suitable for a raw bar, may not be accessible for some home cooks. However, for the most part, his other ingredients are accessible: I'm assuming that, if you're reading this review, you know how to find, for example, raclette cheese. I think it's telling that Chef Keller's very first recipe is "My Favorite Simple Roast Chicken." That sets the tone for his premise, which is to offer traditional food prepared with excellent ingredients and executed with classic techniques. It's clear that Chef Keller wants us to learn about some of his tried-and-true techniques: for example, 5 pages are devoted to making duck confit. I'm definitely going to screw up my courage and try making my own brandade, which is salt cod cured over a few days--oh my goodness. The author provides excellent headnotes, which I love: I really want to know why he thinks each dish is important. Virtually every "what's that?" ingredient in his recipes is clickable to his excellent "Sources" chapter,

in which almost every entry is also clickable to the purveyor's website. Want to know Chef Keller's suggestion for "top quality" canned escargot? Or grenouille, quail, garlic sausages, and duck? Click on the link in his "Sources." Most recipes have color photos. Kindle format review: this book is 100% clickable, which is rare in Kindle books. TOC, Index, chapters, sub-chapters, sources, ingredients, embedded recipes, equipment, and even technique are all cross-clickable. 6 stars to the authors and editors for a fabulous Kindle edition!

Have tried several recipes from this cookbook and I love it! And I love the restaurant!

If you're buying this book.... you probably know who he is... of his work this is the simplest... and thank god it's still complex enough to be THOMAS KELLER. Cooking can be a trade or it can be an ART. Thomas Keller is amazing. The book is beautiful, colorful, and very well made. HUGE... don't expect it to sit nicely with your other books ;) but with the work that he does it feels suiting.

Great service! Book as described and delivered as promised. Thank you

Showed up just as described, and quickly. Also saved me over \$30 instead of buying it new!

I'm still going through this gorgeous tome, but I think it's an essential addition to any chef or aspiring chef's collection. It was recommended to me by a friend and it's a book suited for those who want to fine-tune their perhaps already existent skills in the kitchen. Also, it's beautiful to look at.

Great ideas. Excellent presentation. Haven't used many of the recipes, but the few I did I enjoyed.

Very useful and contains tons of great recipes.

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