



How to Cook Without a Book: Recipes and Techniques Every Cook Should Know by Heart

By Pam Anderson



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How to Cook Without a Book: Recipes and Techniques Every Cook Should Know by Heart By Pam Anderson

Pam Anderson grew up watching her parents and grandparents make dinner every night by simply taking the ingredients on hand and cooking them with the techniques they knew.

Times have changed. Today we have an overwhelming array of ingredients and a fraction of the cooking time, but Anderson believes the secret to getting dinner on the table lies in the past. After a long day, who has the energy to look up a recipe and search for the right ingredients before ever starting to cook? To make dinner night after night, Anderson believes the first two steps--looking for a recipe, then scrambling for the exact ingredients--must be eliminated. Understanding that most recipes are simply "variations on a theme," she innovatively teaches technique, ultimately eliminating the need for recipes.

Once the technique or formula is mastered, Anderson encourages inexperienced as well as veteran cooks to spread their culinary wings. For example, after learning to sear a steak, it's understood that the same method works for scallops, tuna, hamburger, swordfish, salmon, pork tenderloin, and more. You never need to look at a recipe again. Vary the look and flavor of these dishes with interchangeable pan sauces, salsas, relishes, and butters.

Best of all, these recipes rise above the mundane Monday-through-Friday fare. Imagine homemade ravioli and lasagna for weeknight supper, or from-scratch tomato sauce before the pasta water has even boiled. Last-minute guests? Dress up simple tomato sauce with capers and olives or shrimp and red pepper flakes. Drizzle sautéed chicken breasts with a balsamic vinegar pan sauce. Anderson teaches you how to do it--without a recipe. Don't buy exotic ingredients and follow tedious instructions for making hors d'oeuvres. Forage through the pantry and refrigerator for quick appetizers. The ingredients are all there; the method is in your head. Master four simple potato dishes--a bake, a cake, a mash, and a roast--compatible with many meals. Learn how to make the five-minute dinner salad, easily changing its look and flavor depending on the season and occasion. Tuck a few dessert techniques in your back pocket and effortlessly turn any meal into a special occasion.

There's real rhyme and reason to Pam's method at the beginning of every chapter: To dress greens, "Drizzle salad with oil, salt, and pepper, then toss until just slick. Sprinkle in some vinegar to give it a little kick." To make a frittata, "Cook eggs without stirring until set around the edges. Bake until puffy, then cut it into wedges." Each chapter also contains a helpful at-a-glance chart that highlights the key points of every technique, and a master recipe with enough variations to keep you going until you've learned how to cook without a book.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Learn what makes a recipe tick, says *How to Cook Without a Book* author Pam Anderson, and you'll serve great food fast. Recognizing that most cooks feel challenged in the face of daily meal making, Anderson provides a game plan: prepare dishes based on available ingredients and simple cooking techniques you've mastered--not on recipes you've got to look up and ingredients you'll need to shop for--and you maximize the potential of kitchen ease. Cooks looking for a way to address the what-will-we-have-tonight quandary definitively, or those who feel they lack the energy or know-how to tackle cooking every night, should find the book essential. In chapters such as "Simple Stir-Frys" or "Weeknight Ravioli and Lasagna," Anderson presents a particular cooking procedure, provides a recipe that embodies it in its basic form (the protein-adaptable Weeknight Stir-Fry, for example), then offers simple variations (such as Stir-Fried Chicken with Asparagus and Mushrooms or Stir-Fried Shrimp with Pepper and Scallions). Chapters conclude with an at-a-glance review of key technique points. Following Anderson's tips and innovations, lasagna, for example, becomes a weeknight option (use egg-roll wrappers for the pasta, Anderson advises, and forgo the baking); she also shows how, once mastered, her Big Fat Omelet, which serves four, can become the basis for a wide range of lunch and dinner entrées. With a comprehensive pantry section and a dessert chapter that puts frozen puff pastry to work in imaginative ways, the book is a trove of information that cooks can use and depend on. --Arthur Boehm

From Publishers Weekly

Former executive editor of *Cook's* magazine and author of *The Perfect Recipe*, Anderson wants to teach Americans a new way to cook without relying on recipes. It's somewhat surprising, then, to discover that this book is full of recipes. However, readers may cotton to Anderson's method: each chapter consists of a simple technique, basic recipe, variations, key points and a little mnemonic device used to recall the technique. The techniques are, for the most part, terrific time-savers, such as cutting out the back before roasting a whole chicken or making one giant omelet to serve four people so that everyone can eat together. Variations are good, too, although many are so similar to one another that it seems a little repetitious to include a recipe for each (in turn, many of the recipes refer back to the original, resulting in a lot of page-flipping). A chapter on tomato sauces, for example, includes the basic Simple Tomato Sauce, as well as Tomato Sauce with Dried Porcini, Tomato Sauce with Sweet Onions and Thyme, Tomato Sauce with Shrimp and Red Pepper Flakes and many others. A chapter on pan sauces is a winner, encompassing Red Wine-Dijon Pan Sauce, Port Wine Pan Sauce with Dried Cranberries and Balsamic Pan Sauce with Pine Nuts and Raisins. In the end, this cookbook is a solid collection of simple, quick recipes, but with its sometimes scattered format, it is unlikely to free everyday cooks from the tyranny of recipes. (Mar.)
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Review

Praise for **How to Cook Without a Book** by Pam Anderson:

"**How to Cook Without a Book** should win a prize for most understated cookbook title. What Pam Anderson really outlines here is a culinary tradition for today's American family; a practical, nourishing, and delicious way to deal with your family's everyday food life without written-in-stone recipes and without fuss or arcane ingredients. You'll love Pam holding your hand while you create the dishes that your children and grandchildren will one day certainly be cooking without a book."

--Arthur Schwartz, author of **What to Cook** and **Naples at Table**

"For down-to-earth, 'can-do' cooking that tastes terrific, nobody does it better than Pam Anderson. The book's common sense tips and kitchen wisdom will not only inspire new cooks but inform well-seasoned ones, too."

--Rick Rodgers, author of **Thanksgiving 101** and **Christmas 101**

"[The] book gives you confidence that [the recipes] will work, and you will not be disappointed."

--*The New York Times*

"Her writing is sensible and easy to understand. Useful and challenging enough for both experienced cooks and novices."

--*Philadelphia Inquirer*

"My pick for cookbook of the year. . . . It's a book that both novices and experienced cooks will appreciate."

--*Times/Post Intelligencer*, Seattle, WA

"If you want to produce contemporary perfections in standards like meatloaf, roast turkey, cole slaw, and cobbler, this is the book for you."

--*Chattanooga Times*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stephen Conway:

What do you concerning book? It is not important to you? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what yours problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is make one feel bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They must answer that question due to the fact just their can do in which. It said that about publication. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is right. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this How to Cook Without a Book: Recipes and Techniques Every Cook Should Know by Heart to read.

Evelyn Nielson:

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love How to Cook Without a Book: Recipes and Techniques Every Cook Should Know by Heart, you can enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout people. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Philip Raber:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray an individual, why because this How to Cook Without a Book: Recipes and Techniques Every Cook Should Know by Heart guide written by well-known writer whose to

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