

Christmas Gift Books for the Cook



Need some suggestions for a gift to a family member who loves to cook, or for that special friend who has everything, well, how about a good cookbook? I am always blown away by the huge selections of cookbooks available in the bookstores or online. It would take me days to go through all of them before I found the one that I feel will meet my needs. Today's cookbooks are so well photographed and sometimes that alone would draw a novice to make a purchase only to find the recipes are not easy to follow.

When purchasing for a gift be sensitive to the person's cooking capabilities. There are also excellent "coffee table" cookbooks on the market that are enjoyable to read. However, a helpful cookbook, with photographs or not, is one you will use over and over again. Some of mine are so overused that I had to replace them with new copies. I even purchase revised editions of a favorite book. The books that I recommend for gift giving cannot only be purchased at your favorite bookstore, but also online and downloaded to an e-reader. Maybe you will find one from my list to give as a gift or purchase for yourself:

1. ***Joy of Cooking*** (The All New All Purpose) – Irma S. Rombauer, Becker and Becker. The first revised edition was published in 1953. There have been many revisions of this edition to meet the needs of changing public tastes. I refer to this book as my Bible Cookbook. I use it constantly and whenever searching for a recipe I can always find it in *Joy of Cooking*. There are no photographs but a few drawings to illustrate techniques in preparing a recipe. The recipes are easy to follow

for a beginner and will also please the gourmet chef. This is my #1 suggestion. A must in everyone's collection!

2. ***The Thousand Recipe Chinese Cookbook*** – Gloria Bley Miller. This is an excellent book for cooks interested in Chinese recipes. Every Chinese dish you can imagine can be found in this book. Techniques in preparing the food, variations of regional differences in preparation and ingredients, and easy to follow directions. A great book!
3. ***Mastering the Art of French Cooking*** – Julia Childs et al. I recommend this book for collectors, experienced cooks and lovers of French cuisine. A classic!
4. ***The Food Processor Bible*** – Norene Gilletz. Many cooks love using their food processor but are limited as to recipes, techniques, and the usage of the different blades. Easy to follow instructions and excellent selection of recipes. A valuable book!
5. ***American Wholefoods Cuisine*** – Nikki & David Goldbeck. This book was first published in 1983 and is an excellent cookbook for those interested in good health, organic foods and vegetarian recipes. No illustrations, easy to follow instructions, and ingredients that are easy to find. Very informative book!
6. ***Weight Watchers New Complete Cookbook*** – Weight Watchers. I have found all Weight Watcher cookbooks are excellent for dieters and non-dieters. Great illustrations, portion sizes for small servings, healthful cooking techniques, and ingredients make this book an excellent Weight Watcher edition. Book has a spiral cover making it convenient to lay flat when reading a recipe. Any person on a diet would love this book!
7. ***Rocco's Italian American*** – by Rocco DiSpirito. Mr. DiSpirito is a chef who owns two restaurants and had a TV reality show, *The Restaurant*. He features many of the Italian recipes he grew up with and some of his Mama's favorites. I found these Italian recipes to be easy to

follow and typical rustic Italian cooking. The stories of his youth and family, plus the illustrations, make this a very enjoyable book along with easy and delicious recipes. Don't miss this one!

8. ***Now Eat This*** – Rocco Dispirito. In this cookbook Rocco has converted delicious and popular comfort dishes into healthy lower fat and lower calorie recipes. Easy to follow and ingredients can be found in any grocery store. Each recipe includes a Fat count before and after. Beautiful photographs and in paperback edition. A dieter's delight!
9. ***Cooking with My Sisters*** – Adriana Trigiani. Fans of Ms. Trigiani novels and Italian cooking will enjoy this book. Adriana writes about her family and the memories she and her sisters shared in growing up in an Italian household. Each delicious and beautifully photographed recipe has a story included plus comments from the sisters. It's a collection of her family recipes collected over the generations. Not just a cookbook but filled with delightful stories. A book to consider!
10. ***How easy is that?*** – Barefoot Contessa (Ina Garten). Who doesn't know the Barefoot Contessa from the Food Network? This is her latest book and made the top best seller list shortly after its release date. It's beautifully photographed and the recipes are easy as the Contessa promised. I put this in the coffee table category and one that everyone will pick up to read. Good recipes!

Well, I hope my choices for gift giving have been helpful. I wish you a Merry Christmas and may the New Year bring you much happiness, fun shopping, and good eats.