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Cook This Now: 120 Easy And Delectable Dishes You Can't Wait To Make



Synopsis

"This collection of brilliantly conceived, seasonally driven recipes has quickly become one of my favorites. Easy to prepare and incredibly satisfying, this is inventive comfort food at its best. A must for any passionate home cook." --Gwyneth Paltrow, author of *My Father's Daughter* "Fig Snacking Cake? Stupendous Hummus? Whatever Greens You've Got Salad? I want all of it! Melissa's smart, welcoming style and love of food infuse this wonderful cookbook. It's an extremely personal collection of recipes, each with its own subtle twists and original flavors, and on every page you hear Melissa's voice reassuringly guiding you around the kitchen." --Amanda Hesser, author of *The Essential New York Times Cookbook* and co-founder of food52.com

Melissa Clark, New York Times Dining Section columnist, offers a calendar year's worth of brand-new recipes for cooking with fresh, local ingredients--replete with lively and entertaining stories of feeding her own family and friends. Many people want to eat well, organically and locally, but don't know where or even when to begin, since the offerings at their local farmers' market change with the season. In *Cook This Now*, Melissa Clark shares all her market savvy, including what she decides to cook after a chilly visit to the produce section in the dead of winter; what to bring to a potluck dinner that's guaranteed to be a hit; and how she feeds her marathon-running husband and finicky toddler. In addition, she regales us with personal stories about good times with family and friends, and cooking adventures such as her obsessive cherry pie experimentation and the day she threw out her husband's last preserved Meyer lemon. In her welcoming, friendly voice, Melissa takes you inside her life while providing the dishes that will become your go-to meals for your own busy days. Recipes include Crisp Roasted Chicken with Chickpeas, Lemons, and Carrots with Parsley Gremolata; Baked Apples with Fig and Cardamom Crumble; Honey-Roasted Carrot Salad with Arugula and Almonds; Quick-Braised Pork Chops with Spring Greens and Anchovies; Coconut Fudge Brownies--and much more. Melissa delivers easy, delicious meals featuring organic, fresh ingredients that can be uniquely obtained during each particular month. It can be a real challenge to feed families these days, but Melissa's recipes and inviting writing encourage home cooks to venture outside of the familiar, yet please everyone at the table.

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Customer Reviews

One of NPR's Best Cookbooks of 2011: "What Clark does so well is to tweak easy dishes just far enough that they become interesting again. Professional food columnist or not, Clark is at heart a home cook's home cook, with a flair for practical innovation." --T Susan Chang, food writer and NPR Contributor "This collection of brilliantly conceived, seasonally driven recipes has quickly become one of my favorites. Easy to prepare and incredibly satisfying, this is inventive comfort food at its best. A must for any passionate home cook." •Gwyneth Paltrow, author of My Father's Daughter "Fig Snacking Cake Stupendous Hummus Whatever Greens You've Got Salad I want all of it! Melissa's smart, welcoming style and love of food infuse this wonderful cookbook. It's an extremely personal collection of recipes, each with its own subtle twists and original flavors, and on every page you hear Melissa's voice reassuringly guiding you around the kitchen." •Amanda Hesser, author of The Essential New York Times Cookbook and co-founder of food52.com

Crisp Roasted Chicken with Chickpeas, Lemons, and Carrots with Parsley Gremolata When I flip through food magazines, I rarely read the recipes. I look at the photos and imagine what I think the recipe should be. Most of the time I get it pretty close but sometimes I'm way off base. This recipe is an example of that. The photo was of a roasted chicken on a bed of chickpeas and what I thought were tiny cubes of carrot. I could taste the dish in my head. The chickpeas were crunchy and salty next to the melting, sweet carrots and everything was suffused with chicken fat from the roasting bird. In fact, the carrots turned out to be bits of orange bell pepper (definitely not in season in January in New York) and the chickpeas were added to the pan during the last few minutes of cooking so they would stay moist and soft, without the time to absorb much in the way of chicken essence. I'm sure it was a perfectly good dish. But I liked my own idea better. So next time I roasted a chicken, I tried it. I placed the chicken on a rack over the chickpeas and carrot slices so all the

good juices would drip down onto them. I also added slivered lemon because I love the way lemons caramelize when you roast them, and I figured the dish would need some zip to perk up the garam masala, a spicy, earthy Indian spice blend I rubbed on the bird. While it roasted, I chopped together a mix of parsley, lemon zest, and garlic known as gremolata (which is usually served with osso buco) to sprinkle on top. I knew it would give the whole thing some color and a little kick from the garlic, which would be welcome with all the hearty flavors. When everything was done, the chicken was burnished, shining and fragrant, and the chickpeas, lemon bits, and carrots were caramelized and tender. It was so pretty I immediately had to take a picture, which looks nothing like the food porn photo that was its inspiration. I can't say how the flavors compare, but my chicken was darned good - intensely lemony, very succulent, the chickpeas as tempting as bacon. Maybe one day I'll dig up that other recipe to give it a whirl....though given how delightful this dish is, maybe not.Â Â

Â Serves 4

For the Chicken: 2 lemons 2 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas, drained 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil 1 1/2 tablespoons garam masala 2 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper 1 (3 1/2-pound) whole chicken, rinsed and patted dry 4 thyme sprigs 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened 1 pound carrots, peeled, trimmed and cut into 1-inch rounds

For the Gremolata: 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley 1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest 1 small garlic clove, finely chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 400Â F. Quarter the lemons lengthwise and remove and discard any seeds. Thinly slice six of the lemon quarters crosswise (you will get little triangles) and in a bowl, toss them with the chickpeas, oil, 1/2 tablespoon (which equals 1 1/2 teaspoons if you don't have a 1/2 tablespoons measure) of the garam masala, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. 3. Season the inside of the chicken cavity with 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Fill the cavity with remaining wedges of lemon and thyme sprigs. Rub the outside of the chicken all over with the remaining 1 tablespoon garam masala, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Rub the butter all over the skin. 4. Scatter the carrots in the bottom of the largest roasting pan you have (use the one you use for your Thanksgiving turkey). Place a wire roasting rack over the carrots; arrange the chicken, breast-side-up, on the rack. Transfer the pan to the oven and roast, stirring the carrots occasionally, for 30 minutes. Scatter the chickpea mixture into the bottom of the roasting pan. Continue to roast until the chicken's thigh juices run clear when pierced with a knife, 45 to 60 minutes longer. Let chicken rest 5 minutes before carving. 5. Meanwhile, combine the parsley, lemon zest, and garlic in a bowl. Spoon the carrot-chickpea mixture onto a platter; arrange the chicken on top. Sprinkle the gremolata over the dish and serve.

What Else?- Some farmers' market chickens have tough old legs because they develop actual muscle tone from the exercise they get pecking for grubs around the farm. If you suspect

you've got one like this (or you know you do from prior experience with a particular farm), you might want to carve them off the chicken carcass and give them a head start in the oven before adding the breast. That way your breast won't dry out in the time that the legs will need to soften. To do this, carve the legs off the bird and smear those legs and the rest of the chicken carcass with the butter, salt, and seasonings. Put the legs in the pan (along with the carrots) to roast for 15 minutes before adding the carcass with the breasts (tuck the lemon and herbs inside the cavity before roasting). Overall time will be a tad longer than called for above, just keep checking to see when the juices run clear with a knife. A Dish by Another Name:- For a more traditional Sunday Supper Roasted Chicken, you can skip the chickpeas and lemon bits and instead just add a pound of cubed potatoes to the pan along with the carrots. Season carrots and potatoes with salt and pepper and give them a stir once or twice while the chicken roasts. This is good with or without the gremolata.

I adore Melissa Clark and her simple, reliable and delicious recipes. There are loads of fancy recipe books out there where I make hours-long recipes seduced by the sexy photos and wonder why I couldn't have cut out 75% of the steps or worse yet, where the results are less than delicious after all that work. Clark is someone who cooks rather than photographs and packages her recipes (vs. someone like Heidi Swanson of 101 Cookbooks who does a beautiful job of styling and photographing her food). Everything I've made from the book has been easy to follow and really good. They often get tagged for a repeat which doesn't happen all that often. I also really like the notes at the end of the recipe that allows for customizations and such. One thing that I don't love is that the organization of the book makes the recipes a bit less accessible. Now that I'm in California, the seasonal divisions make less sense for me, and I frequently make kale recipes in the summer as well as in the fall/winter. I think I'd prefer an ingredient-centric organization cross-referenced with seasonal menus as suggestions.

If you've ever cooked anything from Melissa's famed Good Appetite column in the NYTimes, you know that her recipes work. They are also delicious and practical for the home cook. This book is her kitchen diary for a year - what she actually cooked for herself and her family. The book is structured seasonally, month by month, making it really easy for those getting into seasonally inspired cooking to follow the book along. Having cooked many recipes from the book already, I can tell you it's a lovely addition to my shelf. So much so that I keep it within arm's reach for inspiration for what to make for tonight's dinner. In fact, tonight we'll be making roasted cauliflower from her book - a delicious, easy, terrific side dish. Andrew Scrivani (who is amazing) photographed this book

- and each picture is mouthwateringly delicious. This will be a book you'll love forever.

I initially borrowed a digital copy of this book from the library and found I had bookmarked at least 12 recipes. My criteria for keeping a cookbook has always been three good recipes, so this one seemed to have great potential. I particularly liked the organization by month, based on what is available in local farmer's markets (at least on the east coast.) When I saw it on sale in the kindle store, I immediately purchased it. Clark's style of cooking is very relaxed and she gives multiple variations to each recipe so that you needn't worry about not having a particular ingredient. A good basic for weeknight meals, with clear and simple instructions and amusing head notes, this is not an exhaustive survey, but a well curated collection of achievable meals that are tasty and reasonable healthy. Enough to keep a foodie interested but not scary to a novice, I highly recommend this book in either digital or old fashioned paper format. (The digital format has a few extras which are nice...)

Melissa Clark's inauthentic, but superb recipe for a Moroccan vegetarian stew in the NYT inspired me to order one of her books. This one was recommended by several reviewers because it is somewhat lighter than her first book, ideal for healthy everyday cooking. I use it often. Every recipe I've tried has turned out perfectly. Many are vegan (or can be easily made so), simple to make, but impressive to present.

This is a terrific book with recipes that will go directly into your arsenal. The recipes are organized by month of the year, which is actually a really engaging and sensible way of putting them together. You don't have to read through 30 chicken recipes, half of which you can't make that day anyway. I gave it to a friend who told me she kept telling her husband "Just let me read one more month!" before going to sleep. There are recipes in here for every day, recipes that are sophisticated enough for foodie company and yet you won't spend all day making them, and there's a recipe for mallomars which I made and is a revelation. Every recipe has options and suggestions for switching things up, adding or taking away ingredients, and pairing. I highly recommend it for anyone or for any gift giving.

I've made a half dozen recipes from this in the couple week's since I bought it, and they're all winners. Well written, consistently presented, and delicious. The fried mushrooms are a must make, and worth the price of admission. My favorite feature is that most of the recipes have adjustments and ideas appended, multiplying their usefulness.

Melissa Clark is my NYT favorite. Love the way she incorporates anchovies into things. Everything she does is great and all of her books are wonderful

melissa is a great cook and imparts her knowledge clearly

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