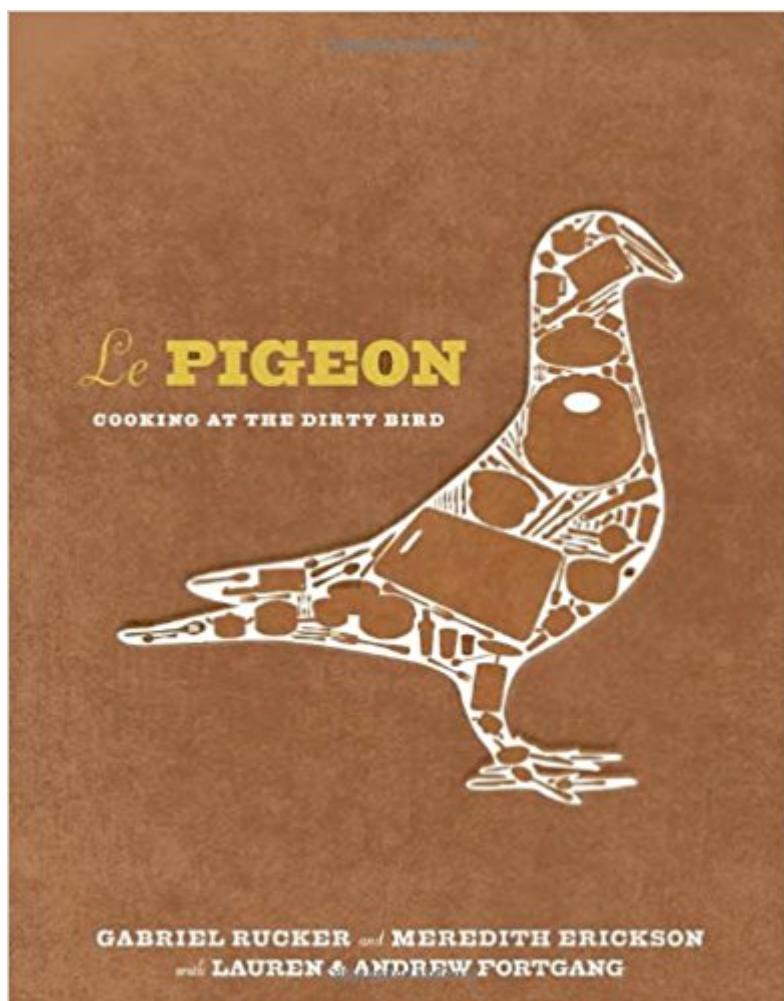


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# Le Pigeon: Cooking At The Dirty Bird



## Synopsis

This debut cookbook from James Beard Rising Star Chef Gabriel Rucker features a serious yet playful collection of over 125 recipes from his phenomenally popular Portland restaurant. Dining at Le Pigeon is a celebration of high and low extremes in cooking: Buffalo hot wings are elevated with the substitution of sweetbreads, a simple potato salad gets a dirty with the addition of chicken livers, and a \$3 Coors appears next to premier cru Burgundies on the wine list. Serious yet playful, this debut cookbook recounts the ascension of James Beard Award-winning chef Gabriel Rucker to the top of the Portland food scene and the shift of a modest neighborhood eatery to a must-visit destination. Offal-centric and meat-heavy, but by no means dogmatic, this collection of 125 recipes offers uncommon delicacies like Elk Tongue Stroganoff and Rabbit and Eel Terrine, envelope-pushing twists on classics like Beef Cheeks Bourguignon and Lamb Belly BLT, and surprisingly uncomplicated dishes like Simple Roasted Pigeon, Leek Carbonara, and Pork Tacos. Featuring wine recommendations from sommelier Andrew Fortgang, stand-out desserts from pastry chef Lauren Fortgang, and stories about the restaurant's raucous, seat-of-the-pants history by writer Meredith Erickson, Le Pigeon combines the wild and the refined in a unique, progressive, and delicious style.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fans of the Le Pigeon Restaurant in Portland, Oregon are going to fall for this lovingly-created book that highlights the best of the first five years of its existence. The story is told not only in the recipes,

but in the beautiful pictures and stories and essays that help the reader reminisce. It is hard to write a review of a restaurant chef's cookbook. How to balance a star rating between stunning talent and superb recipes that work in a restaurant, and what works at home? How to inform a potential cookbook buyer of its at-home-cooking value, without offending the talented chef, the restaurant staff that works so hard, and the restaurant fans? Oftentimes, chefs and restaurant staff are so close to their work, that they don't see that their supplies, their abilities, their facilities are way more sophisticated than what is the norm for a home cook. Please believe me when I say that I don't mean to offend anyone; and if you read my words carefully, I hope you can see that my review is as unbiased and informative as I can make it. It is posted here to help you make an informed choice--whether or not to BUY the book. If I wrote my review as an "advertisement" for the restaurant, I would be writing my review for all the wrong reasons. So, please, if you don't like my better-than-average "I like it, I truly do" four-star rating, let me know where my thinking is wrong by way of a comment below--and not a simple negative vote....I usually shy away from restaurant chef cookbooks because, while the recipes are always fabulous, they are often works of art and complicated, with long ingredient lists and hard to find (and oftentimes expensive) ingredients. Excuse me, but that is why I "go out" to dinner! I like to cook, but I don't often want to spend all day in the kitchen. I also don't like spending a day shopping for special ingredients, or waiting days for an internet order to arrive. This cookbook falls into that category. So while it is definitely a wonderful and beautiful grouping of recipes, you should be aware that you are not going to find a majority of recipes that you can whip together on a week night. You may want to pick up this book simply because it is a product of your favorite restaurant and its up-and-coming chef OR you might just pass it by because most of the recipes are not simple and easy to prepare. You may want to pick it up for its lessons in creativity, as the chef is definitely insightful and intuitive. This cookbook is a combination of the laborious works of art that I describe above, plus wonderful (Oregon and Pacific Northwest) sourcing information and tips, plus some good ole' easy favorites. You will find that most of the recipes incorporate ingredients that are plentiful (or popular) in the Pacific Northwest. You will definitely find the Le Pigeon chefs' "keeper" recipes. You want to recreate a dinner you've had there? Then, this book's for you. The chapter titles provide some insight into the type of recipes included: The book opens with "Lettuce and Such" and it's probably the "tamest" of all. The next chapters get into the meat of things: "Tongue" (lamb, elk, beef, pork); "Fat Liver" (foie gras); "Little Birds" (pigeon, squab, duck, quail, pheasant); "Rabbit" (smoked, in a terrine with eel, braised, chicken-fried, etc.); "Little Terry" (fried razor clams, Dungeness crab, geoduck, octopus, black scallops, clams, escargot, etc.); "Big Terry" (sea bass, trout, king salmon, swordfish, sturgeon,

halibut); "Pork" (belly, cheek, shoulder confit, foot, and a simple roast pork loin); "Horns and Antlers" (beef cheek, heart, tripe, oxtail, hanger steak, calf's head, sweetbreads, bone marrow, rib-eye and a burger); "Lamb" (ground, shank, neck, belly, brains, etc.); "Veg" (eleven fairly sophisticated vegetable dishes), and last but not least "Choco, Tart, Profit" (a nice grouping of sorbets, ice creams, a pie and a cake.) Ingredient lists are long, but precise and accurate. There are full-color pictures for most of the recipes. Layout and type style make the recipe instructions easy to follow. I picked up this book because I am interested in unusual cuts of pork and beef and in recipes using more unusual meats. From the paragraph above, you can tell I found that plenty of recipes to feed my interest. I won't be buying this book, though: While I consider myself an experienced cook, I am still a home cook. These recipes are too involved for my taste. Plus, I live in Texas, so most of the fresh fish and seafood chapters are out of bounds for me because we don't see much West Coast product here. And the "Fat Liver" chapter I wouldn't use because I'm not going to indulge in foie gras (except on rare occasions when visiting a top notch restaurant). All in all, it was a very interesting cookbook to browse through, but it is not my style. I had to give it a four-star rating though, because I think it would be of interest to people in and around Portland--and I surely wouldn't want to dissuade those people from considering this book. Plus a lot of work went into creating this book.\*\* I received a temporary download of this cookbook from the publisher, through NetGalley. I've been scrutinizing and working with this cookbook for about two months.\*\*

Here is a book that any real foodie will like, even though some of the wonderful photographs might be viewed as a little creepy or scary by many. So, what do you get from this richly-illustrated, thick tome written by some of the team who create the culinary magic at the Portland, Oregon-based "Le Pigeon" restaurant? Things start with a genuinely interesting little introduction that explains the history of the restaurant to date and, unlike many books, this is not "ego city". Then it is straight to the kitchen to get cooking. The recipes are split into curiously-named chapters called "Lettuce and Such", "Tongue", "Fat Liver", "Little Birds", "Rabbit", "Little Terry", "Big Terry", "Pork", "Horns and Antlers", "Lamb", "Veg" and "Choco, Tart, Profit". Some but not all may be fairly self-explanatory... Many of the recipes will appear "high end" and "exclusive dining" and yet when you look at the ingredients they might be everyday items that the typical consumer would avoid if they saw it in the food store. Not that many people like cooking tongue, for example, yet it sure is a versatile part and a shame to ignore it. This is a book you need to really read through, at least once, to get the most out of it. There is plenty of strange terminology (at least to this reviewer) and many funny anecdotes tucked away where you least expect them, such as a customer finding a bullet lodged in a

long-cooked piece of tongue (!). If you are prepared to "push the envelope" a bit and trust in the authors then you will not be disappointed. This is one of those very few books that can be classed as "truly different", an inner sanctum for foodies and food curious people, yet the authors did not need to rely on tricks or strange food combinations to create this masterpiece. The food speaks for itself. In some ways the sheer, stark nature of some of the photographs is more "alarming" than the recipes and their textual descriptions. Cooked pigeon legs sticking out of a plastic container is not a typical image for a cookbook, that is for sure. Yet the photographs are artwork in their own right, such as that used to illustrate "Rabbit and Eel Terrine". It is unfortunate that our usual niggles exist in this book (lack of an estimated preparation/cooking time and use of sole U.S. measures) but this book remains sufficiently different, engaging and detailed that you just want more, more and more. The instructions given are clear, to-the-point but thorough so as long as you can follow a recipe and don't burn water you would have no problems. This won't be a book for everybody and if the idea of cooking "less common" ingredients is possibly not for you, consider checking this book out in a bookstore first. There are more "common" ingredient recipes inside too, but for this author at least part of the charm and appeal is the use of "less common" ingredients. One must underline that this book is capable of being suitable for everybody and not just "elite gastronomes". You might, however, need to be less squeamish or picky and disassociate rabbit as just being something fluffy that hops around a field. If you only consider one out-of-the-ordinary book this year, give some strong consideration to this one.

Not many cookbook came out in recent year reach the same cult status as White Heat, Beyond nose to tail, Au Pied de Cochon. I felt this book has it. It's a fun cookbook and what everyday meal should look like, not commercialized meat. I want my everyday dinner to be like this. Getting chicken with feet on it. How many time you would see chicken in supermarket with feet still intact or head and neck? That's what food should look like as pure as it was over 150-200 years ago before commercialized farming started. I feel Gabriel Rucker is a kinda chef around my neighbor, less ego. Just cook good food and make food fun. His personality has stamped all over this book. I love this book so much that I ordered two more copies and sent them to friends. After reading this book, I simply want to book a flight to PDX to visit my soul sister, eat there, and walk up to the kitchen to say hello to him. And she is a huge fan of this restaurant.

I love this book. It is well written, candid and full of amazing recipes. These guys are masters at their craft and are generous to share their story and their favorite recipes. It is pure inspiration. There are

amazing full meal recipes and also a great section in the back with basics like the best blue cheese salad dressing I have every had.

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