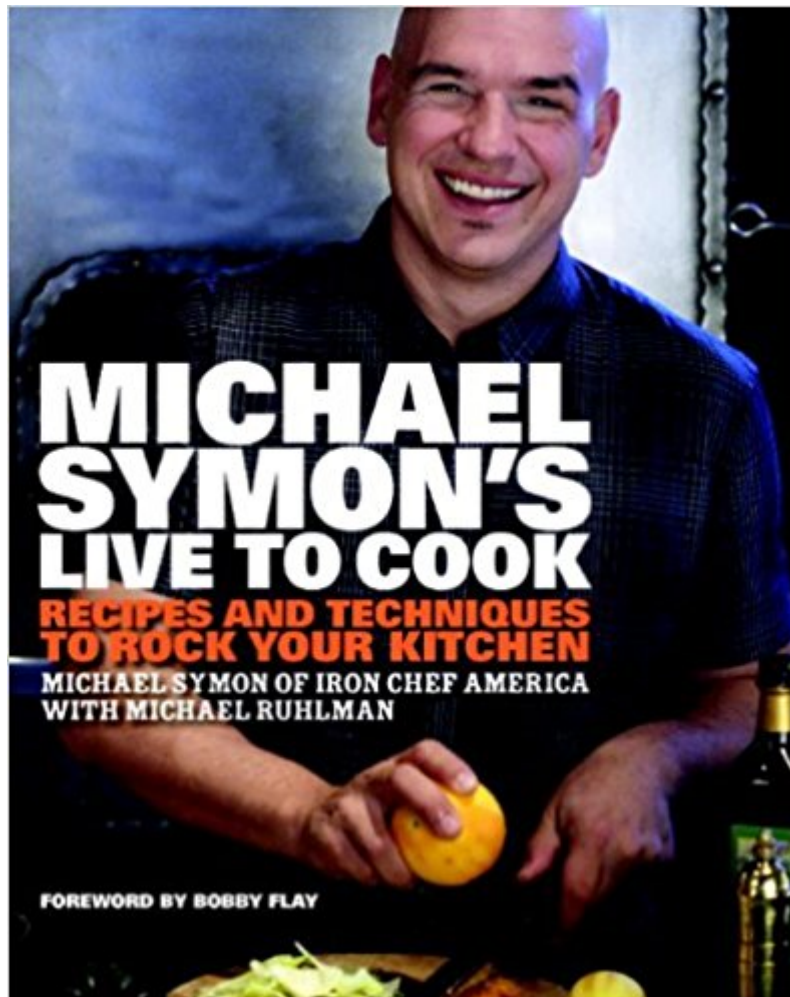


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Michael Symon's Live To Cook: Recipes And Techniques To Rock Your Kitchen



Synopsis

Hometown boy turned superstar, Michael Symon is one of the hottest food personalities in America. Hailing from Cleveland, Ohio, he is counted among the nation's greatest chefs, having joined the ranks of Mario Batali, Bobby Flay, and Masaharu Morimoto as one of America's Iron Chefs. At his core, though, he's a midwestern guy with family roots in old-world traditions. In Michael Symon's *Live to Cook*, Michael tells the amazing story of his whirlwind rise to fame by sharing the food and incredible recipes that have marked his route. Michael is known for his easy, fresh food. He means it when he says that if a dish requires more than two pans to finish, he's not going to make it. Cooking what he calls "heritage food" based on the recipes beloved by his Greek, Italian, Eastern European, and American parents and the community in Cleveland, Michael draws on the flavors of traditional recipes to create sophisticated dishes, such as his Beef Cheek Pierogies with Wild Mushrooms and Horseradish, which came out of the pierogies that his grandpa made. Michael translates the influences of the diverse working-class neighborhood in which he grew up into dishes with Mediterranean ingredients, such as those in Olive Oil Poached Halibut with Fennel, Rosemary, and Garlic; Italian-style handmade pastas, like Linguini with Heirloom Tomato, Capers, Anchovies, and Chilies; and re-imagined Cleveland favorites, such as Mac and Cheese with Roasted Chicken, Goat Cheese, and Rosemary. Part of Michael's irresistible allure on the Food Network comes from how much fun he has in the kitchen. To help readers gain confidence and have a good time, Michael Symon's *Live to Cook* has advice for cooking like a pro, starting with basic instructions for how to correctly use techniques such as braising, poaching, and pickling. There's also information on how caramelizing vegetables and toasting spices can give dishes a greater depth of flavor instead of a heavy, time-consuming stock-based sauce and why the perfect finishing touch to most meat or fish dishes can be a savory hot vinaigrette instead. With fantastic four-color photography throughout and tons of helpful "Symon Says" tips, Michael Symon's *Live to Cook* is bound to get anyone fired up about getting into the kitchen and cooking up something downright delicious.

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Midwest

Customer Reviews

I'm a Cleveland girl, so I really wanted to love this cookbook written by a Cleveland boy...and I do!

Let me start by saying I'm definitely a Michael Symon fan. I've been to 2 of his restaurants, and really love the food at both. I watched him win the Next Iron Chef competition, and watch him on the Food Network every chance I get. Last weekend I went to hear him speak at an event, which was followed by a book signing of *Live to Cook*. I perused the book before the lecture and decided not to buy it. Well, after I heard him speak, I couldn't get in line quick enough to buy the book! In addition to being a fabulous chef, he seems to be a genuinely nice guy -- someone you'd want to be friends with. He's so passionate about his work, and more importantly, passionate about his life, family, and friends. His food philosophy is simple and right on -- Eat fresh, whole, local, and seasonal foods; and, processed foods are evil. He was funny and engaging. I could have listened to him all day. By the time the lecture was over, I couldn't wait to get ahold of his cookbook. Considering his passion for what he does, I figured the cookbook couldn't possibly be bad. I was intrigued by the fact that the cookbook contains not only recipes, but also cooking tips and techniques. In addition, it is a story book of sorts, giving the reader a glimpse into the life of Michael Symon. I couldn't wait to dig in. Let me tell you, this is a great book! I read it from cover to cover over the weekend. Some of his recipes contain ingredients we aren't accustomed to cooking with (beef cheeks, pork belly, etc.), but believe me, his food is delicious! I was so pleased to see that he put recipes in the book for some of his classic dishes. Some of the best are the Beef Cheeks Pierogies with Wild Mushrooms and Horseradish; Lola Fries; his famous Mac and Cheese with Rosemary, Goat Cheese and Chicken; Fried Brussels Sprouts; Spicy Tomato Soup with Blue Cheese; Dates with Chiles; Dill Pickles...I could go on and on. In addition to the recipes being absolutely delicious, they are easy to follow and generally uncomplicated. Many times he offers suggestions for substitutions in his recipes, which is nice (e.g., substituting beef shoulder for the beef cheeks in the Beef Cheeks Pierogies). Let me tell you, this man is a food genius, pure and simple. I've already made a few recipes, and can't wait to

make more. I encourage you to buy this cookbook. You won't be disappointed!

Like another reviewer commented that he was not excited about this long awaited Symon cookbook initially from its cover nor quick look through the collection, that was my exact reaction. But I knew that Symon can cook the doors off an oven and so made myself carefully go through it. The cover does project Michael's great smile, but it should have had another Symon distinctive, in fact a first for a cookbook. It should have been fitted with one of those "sound producing greeting cards when you open the cover" to have his infectious laugh with busy kitchen sounds in the background. I first ran into Michael in friend Ruhlman's "Soul of a Chef." Next, saw him on FoodTV network in Melting Pot, and then later in Iron Chef competition. Had on top of this that his new restaurant here in Detroit, "Roast" made me check it out. It was superb, so I knew I had to dig and mine this cookbook more than a casual pass. This reviewer loves the intro writings of the chef(s) and what their philosophy of cooking is, and why this cookbook? Michael is to the point: "approachability! Share food with home cook! straightforward! economical! minimal embellishments! big, big flavors and soulful satisfactions! It's also to be a tribute to his heritage, to which we all should admire and give it a taste. It's Greek-Italian-Slovakian. He's typical in admonishing us home cooks to buy best ingredients and apply good technique, and wanting us home wanna be's to be better with every dish. What is fascinating about all this as Symon points out is his sections on charcuterie and pickling. Not many of us mess around with these areas, so this will be adventuresome to say the least to indulge. My early venture into Symon's world is not extensive to this point, but can report that he meets his goals easily and persuasively. I made the Pierogies with Wild Mushrooms and Horseradish (my wife is nuts about pierogies) and substituted cubed beef shoulder for the cheeks as Symon Says, and the dish sung! His restaurant was famous because he kept prices low and used minimal pots/pans, limiting himself to \$20 back in late '90s and 2 pan max. Here, it takes 3: pasta pot, skillet for mushrooms and Dutch oven, but the results are worth it. Also, tried his Spicy Tomato and Blue Cheese Soup and it is unique and a go-to! Heat of sriracha and rich blue cheese combine with San Marzanos tomatoes to make this rich and satisfying bowl of pleasure. Didn't have opportunity here to go with his recommended blue cheese source, but will try it out soon. Substituted Maytag Blue and it seemed grand. This is definitely a home centered cookbook, and one the into-it home chef will want to refer to often to learn this wonderful ethnic collection and technique improving offering, as are the Symon Says sidebars. The photos are excellent as are all Clarkston Potter offerings.

In the space of one breakfast spent with Chef Symon and through perusing his newest cookbook, I could just tell this guy isn't selling baloney; unless good bologna. No, I'd say his were very straightforward tips like forget the milk and/or water in the eggs. Eggs should be eggs and nature gave them the right consistency. Or, don't chop the heck out of your herbs; just give them a good chop-through and leave them alone or you'll damage the flavor. Symon's take on product is also to be admired; take note of it anytime he mentions where he gets his product, as the bacon he uses takes an already sublime project to new heights of sublimity:) In short, this guy knows what he's talking about and this is one of the more usable and handy cookbooks for the home chef that any celeb chef has put out--and this from a guy who's 18-3 on Iron Chef?

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