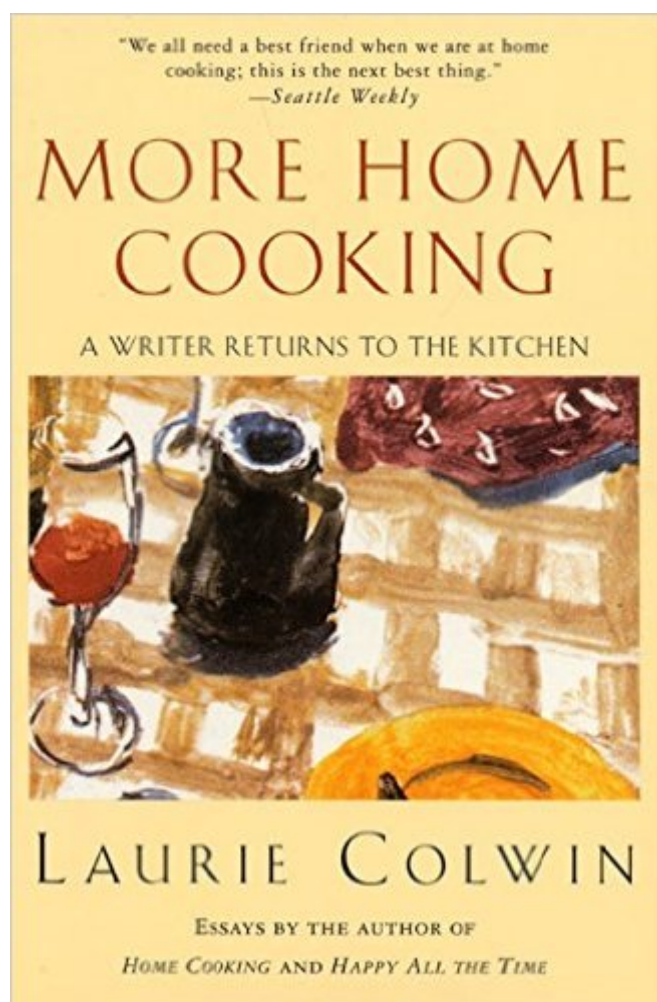


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More Home Cooking



Synopsis

More Home Cooking, like its predecessor, Home Cooking, is an expression of Laurie Colwin's lifelong passion for cuisine. In this delightful mix of recipes, advice, and anecdotes, she writes about often overlooked food items such as beets, pears, black beans, and chutney. With down-to-earth charm and wit, Colwin also discusses the many pleasures and problems of cooking at home in essays such as "Desserts That Quiver," "Turkey Angst," and "Catering on One Dollar a Head." As informative as it is entertaining, More Home Cooking is a delicious treat for anyone who loves to spend time in the kitchen.

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Customer Reviews

I think I've read every book Laurie Colwin has written, and I miss her. I refer to both her food books frequently-- both for recipes and for her down-home wisdom about what's good (if not necessarily good for you. Her strong opinions are not necessarily mine-- I still haven't acquired a taste for paprika, and she uses way too much butter, but her gingerbread recipe is the one comfort food I turn to on snowy days, and her essays on roasting chicken are a treasure. Having this book (both of them, actually) is like having a really good friend who loves to cook and eat as much as you do.

'More Home Cooking' by Laurie Colwin is the kind of book that really makes you wish you could become friends with the author. Unfortunately, the author is no longer with us and I believe this volume was published posthumously, so there is a lot more than the usual barrier between celebrity

and mere mortal between reader and writer. Like the first volume, 'Home Cooking', chapters in the book are essays composed of both culinary and autobiographical material, although the book is not a memoir à la Ruth Reichl's two books. It is also not culinary criticism or exposition in the style of John Thorne. It is most similar to the kind of essays written by M.F.K. Fisher and Elizabeth David, one of the author's heroes. In one of her essays, Ms. Colwin puts her finger on a reason for the popularity of cookbooks and cooking shows in the face of what some people claim to be the disappearance of home cooking. Reading about cooking is simply very comforting and reassuring. I find that I may not learn a whole lot from a particular Ina Garten or Paula Deen or Sara Moulton show on the Food Network, but it is certainly reassuring to watch, if even for the fourteenth time, how Ina cooks salmon so she can have it at two different meals with her guests being none the wiser regarding the doubling up on the effort. Ms. Colwin gained this insight by reading Elizabeth David's 'Italian Food' while under the influence of a particularly acute hangover. And, her admiration of David's style is well demonstrated in the way Ms. Colwin writes recipes. There is none of the formal list of ingredients at the top with neatly laid out prep instructions so one can do their mise en place in true French brigade fashion. This is straight from Elizabeth David's spare recipe writing style done at a time when home cooks knew a lot more about cooking than they do today, or that at least is the pattern among the Cassandras of modern culinary journalism. Fortunately, Ms. Colwin's writing is less about cooking technique than it is about how we do and should think about cooking and food. It is to culinary journalism much like the editorial pages are to political journalism. Like all very good culinary journalism such as that done by Anthony Bourdain and Michael Ruhlman, this is stuff you can read and reread on rainy March afternoons. It is doubly good in that Ms. Colwin is speaking from a quarter she knows well, the slightly atypical American housewife. Very highly recommended culinary reading. Recipes are more for inspiration than real life cooking, unless you just love to deconstruct Elizabeth David recipes.

Laurie Colwin was a talented writer and had a real feel for the essential qualities of great food. Though not a chef or professional cook, she used her writing skills to delve into the mysteries of what makes good food great. And she did that with some of the funniest, sharpest, best writing since M.F.K. Fisher. Alas, Laurie died in 1992, much too young, so you have to savor every scrap of writing she left us, in essays for Gourmet Magazine, and these, in her Home Cooking volumes. Colwin wrote some novels as well, but really, her food writing is what I appreciate the most. As Colwin's writing is opinionated and passionate: she goes into raptures over things most 7 year olds (and quite a few adults) would gag over; succotash, beets, goat's milk yogurt. Yet her

sense of what makes food essentially wonderful will have even the most confirmed vegetable-a-phobe at least thinking about trying her succotash recipe or maybe even looking at a raw beetroot with calm impartiality. In case you are certain you will still shun beets and lima beans, at least read her description of how to roast a duck. It's splendid.

It's been many years since I've actually indulged my love for cooking. My food preparation had long been limited to two choices: (1)add Lawry's seasoning salt and bake/fry/broil, and (2)fast food. Recently, I became reacquainted with my inner chef and became obsessed with cookbooks and books about food. I came across More Home Cooking during one of my recent trips to the local bookstore. I was intrigued by the tag, "A Writer Returns to the Kitchen." (I love good writing and I love good food.) The chapter titles sounded promising: Why I Love Cookbooks; The Case of the Mysterious Flatbread; How to Cook Like an American; Turkey Angst...Plus, the book had recipes! This was clearly a writer who had more than a passing interest in food; this was a true believer. So, what of this book? It's simply wonderful. It's not a book you rush through all at once, but rather one you can carry with you and savor in those brief windows of time throughout your day: during lunch break, while waiting in a line, in the car wash...Colwin's writing is so well-done it seems effortless and comes across as a conversation with an articulate friend who loves to talk about food. She's opinionated, good-humored, and honest in her essays about the merits of certain foods, the drawbacks of others, advice about food and living, and events from her own daily life. From her chapter entitled, In Search of Latvian Bread, regarding her attempt to replicate this bread: "The results were, to my mind, mixed. An Estonian came for supper and said it tasted exactly like the bread he had had in Moscow. I was not sure that this was a compliment. A dancer friend, also at dinner, tasted it and said he liked the other bread (miche from the greenmarket) better. My husband said that it was wonderful, but that I should have added rye flour. The Estonian said this bread would keep forever. I was not sure that this was a compliment." It's these little moments about her curiosity about food, her willingness to experiment, and her genuine fondness for food and the people it nourishes that make this book one you'll read through once and then pick up every now and again, just to enjoy a chapter or two once more. Incidentally, it wasn't until I was nearly finished with this book that I read the "About the Author" paragraph on the back cover. That's when I learned that Laurie Colwin had died in 1992; I felt a flicker of sadness. I would certainly have looked forward to future "conversations" with this engaging writer.

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