

Mark Bittman's Kitchen Matrix: More Than 700 Simple Recipes and Techniques to Mix and Match for Endless Possibilities: A Cookbook

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Bestselling author Mark Bittman anthologizes his popular Matrix series in a boldly graphic new cookbook featuring 400 recipes that emphasize creativity, improvisation, and simplicity as the keys to varied cooking.

For years, Mark Bittman has shared his formulas, recipes, and kitchen improvisations in his popular New York Times Eat column, in which an ingredient or essential technique is presented in different variations in a bold matrix. Accompanied by striking photographs and brief, straightforward instructions, these thematic matrices show how simple changes in preparation and ingredient swaps in a master recipe can yield dishes that are each completely different from the original, and equally delicious.

In Mark Bittman's Kitchen Matrix, Mark's matrices come together to create a collection of over 400 flexible recipes covering vegetables, fruits, meats and chicken, and even desserts. Whether you're cooking up soup (creamy, brothy, earthy, or hearty), freezing ice pops (in fruity, savory, creamy, or boozy varieties), or preparing asparagus (steamed, roasted, stir-fried, or grilled), following Mark's approach to culinary improvisation will deliver stand-out results.

Mark Bittman has had a uniquely successful career in cookbooks and food journalism. He's written more than a dozen books, including the now-classic How to Cook Everything and the bestselling VB6 (Vegan Before 6), which defined a new style of American eating. His 13-year New York Times column "The Minimalist" was among the most popular in the paper, and he just completed a five-year run on the OpEd pages of the Times, where he was the first (and most influential) weekly columnist tackling food issues for a major media outlet.

INTRODUCTION

For years I've said, "If you can cook 10 recipes, you can cook 10,000," and while I've always felt it was true, I've never believed it more strongly than I do right now. Writing this book has convinced me all over again that from simple recipes spring nearly endless possibilities.

Real home cooking, to borrow an old but apt cliché, is a marathon, not a sprint. It's something you do day to day, week to week, season to season, year to year, forever. Most of us who cook on a regular basis don't constantly come up with brilliant and innovative dishes- I'd probably be out of ideas in a month- nor do we slavishly follow recipes to the letter; I'd be bored in a week. Instead, we stake out a sweet spot somewhere in the middle: we learn how to cook a handful of basic dishes- salad and vinaigrette, tomato sauce, or soup, for instance- and what to do with everyday ingredients, like chicken breasts, shrimp, or potatoes. As soon as we're comfortable with core recipes and techniques we begin to improvise, swapping cilantro for parsley, say, or braising in coconut milk instead of wine, or grilling instead of broiling. We embrace the small but meaningful variations that can transform the identity of a dish, make an old favorite taste like a new creation, and turn a modest repertoire of recipes into a lifetime of wonderful meals.

This book showcases and encourages the kind of creativity and flexibility that make daily cooking not just doable but also pleasurable. And it takes little more than a glance at the chapters here- "Apples, 12 Ways," "Slaw, 8 Ways," "Leg of Lamb, 3 Ways"- you get the idea: to figure out my fundamental approach, pick an ingredient or a dish and see just how

many things you can do with it. The result is a collection that looks quite different from anything I've done before, and thanks to the stunning photography, more beautiful. The recipes come in multiple guises: some are conventional with ingredient lists and steps; others are more radical with directions scarcely longer than a tweet. Many are meant to facilitate improvisation in the kitchen, catering to all sorts of cooking styles and preferences.

Whether you like to stick to the script or cook off the cuff, undertake all-day projects or bang out fast weeknight meals, plan a detailed menu or shop first and ask questions later, there is something here for you. With this combination of recipes, art, and text I hope to depict as richly and inventively as I can just how infinitely gratifying cooking can be.

GROUND RULES

1. All recipes serve four unless otherwise noted.
2. Salt and pepper is assumed for every recipe (except desserts) where it's not mentioned explicitly. Use your judgment, but do use salt.
3. When neutral oil is specified you can use grapeseed or corn oil (safflower and sunflower are fine too).
4. Olive oil means extra-virgin.
5. All lemon and lime juice should be fresh.
6. All butter is unsalted.
7. All cream is heavy (whipping) cream.
8. Flour is all-purpose unless otherwise specified.
9. For scallions, use both white and green parts unless specified.
10. For ingredients that don't have specific quantities listed, use your judgment and taste, taste, taste.

Other Books

The Minimalist Cooks at Home. People are hungry for ways to simplify their cooking--without sacrificing quality or taste. Now you can satisfy that hunger with The Minimalist Cooks at Home. Mark Bittman, author of the "New York Times column "The Minimalist," brings one hundred of his innovative recipes (many never published before) right into your kitchen. But The Minimalist Cooks at Home is so much more than recipes. It features Mark's personal quick-cooking lessons, shortcuts, and ideas for variations, substitutions, and spin-offs. Mark doesn't believe in arduous techniques, long lists of ingredients, and even longer hours in the kitchen. Instead, with a few choice ingredients and a few easy steps, dishes such as Paella, Fast and Easy; Ziti with Butter, Sage, and Parmesan; Spicy Chicken with Lemon-grass and Lime; and 15-Minute Fruit Gratin can be on your table in no time. And by encouraging versatility, The Minimalist Cooks at Home allows cooks of all skill levels to create a tailored repertoire of sophisticated dinners. This is modern cooking at its best--flexible, fast, and fabulous.

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