

## The Best Cookbooks of 2008

Get Sara Moulton's Picks for Best Cookbooks of the Year

By SARA MOULTON

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"Good Morning America" food editor Sara Moulton picked out the best cookbooks of the year.

Check out the list below and find out what recipes steamed up the pages of the best cookbooks of 2008.

### "300 Sensational Soups," by Carla Snyder and Meredith Deeds

There were many good soup books published in 2008, but this one was my favorite because of its variety and creativity.

There are 300 soups in here to choose from, and many of them would make a perfect meal, perhaps with some crusty bread and a tossed green salad. Given the current economic climate, soup for supper is an excellent idea.

The next two books, "Urban Italian" and "Fish Without a Doubt," are part of the Gourmet Cookbook Club, an exclusive club of some of the best cookbooks from around the world as chosen by editors at Gourmet Magazine. Head to [Gourmet.com](http://Gourmet.com) for more information.

### "Urban Italian," by Andrew Carmellini

"Urban Italian" is all about really delicious, stick-to-your-ribs Italian home cooking, and, surprise of all surprises (because he is known as an accomplished chef), Carmellini happens to be a great writer. I loved reading the introduction and head notes as much as the recipes.

### "Fish Without a Doubt," by Rick Moonen and Roy Finamore

If you are scared of cooking fish, this is the book for you. Rick covers every topic on the subject of fish that you might want to know about, like (and this is the big one) how to know when fish is done and how to get rid of that fishy smell in the kitchen after you have cooked it.

The recipes are very accessible to the novice. They are simple but delicious.

### "Cuisine Latina," by Michelle Bernstein

I have been a fan of Michelle Bernstein's for years, and I am so glad she finally came out with a cookbook.

She has made a name for herself as a chef in Miami, with a fresh new take on Latin cuisine. Her recipes are a blend of her mother's home cooking and her French culinary training, also including flavors from all the countries she has visited in South America, the Caribbean and Mexico.

### "Screen Doors and Sweet Tea," by Martha Hall Foose

Lovely, evocative homey writing with comfort food recipes. You really get a flavor of growing up in the country in Mississippi from the book, and there is a lot of useful information about ingredients. It's a great read, even if you don't make one recipe.

### "The Modern Baker," by Nick Malgieri and "Baking for All Occasions," by Flo Braker

I am more of a cooker than a baker, but these two books, written by two of my favorite cookbook authors, really grabbed me.

Both books start with very helpful descriptions of ingredients, tools and basic techniques. I have taken classes from Nick Malgieri, and he is a great teacher.

This book offers techniques for the novice and the accomplished baker. Most important is that for almost all of the 150 recipes, the bulk of the preparation is done in under an hour.

I love the way Braker has divided her chapters by occasions  such as cooking for a crowd, cooking for a rainy day (cooking and freezing items for later), individual desserts to make someone feel special and desserts from the farmer's markets. It made me rethink dessert.

### "Dessert Express," by Lauren Chattman

This is a book for the baking impaired (like me)  not that it will teach you how to bake. It will teach you how to make it seem like you baked.

The subtitle is "100 Sweet Treats You Can Make in 30 Minutes or Less." Chattman takes very creative advantage of prepared ingredients, but there are also some recipes that start with raw ingredients. What an ingenious idea -- to use a muffin top pan for making little cakes from scratch

in 10 minutes for "Mini Walnut Layer Cakes!"

**"Around the World Cookbook," by Abigail Johnson Dodge**

I have always believed you could teach everything to kids through food. This book has quite a bit of that covered, and in a very fun way.

There are 50 recipes, a section on basic techniques and skills, facts about culture, history and ingredients, maps and colorful photography. I am thinking I might give it to both of my college kids, even though it is written for the grade school age, because the recipes look so tasty and the techniques are so simple.

**"Knives Cooks Love," by Sarah Jay**

Picture book on knives with great photography for the home cook (and a few recipes). This book makes a dull subject interesting and covers most of what you need to know about buying, storing, sharpening and using a knife. It's perfect for the new home cook.

**"The Flavor Bible," by Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg**

This book is for the serious home cook. Page and Dornenburg start with a fascinating discussion of all the components that go into making flavor. Then they interview several prominent chefs about how they build flavor (which is my favorite part of the book) followed by a list of ingredients and what they pair well with. This book will give the home cook wings to invent their own dishes without the aid of a recipe.

**"Beyond the Great Wall," by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid**

This is a huge beautiful coffee table book about "the other China" (the areas of China beyond the urbanized eastern areas) as the authors describe it and the other China's food which is different from what we are used to. The history, geography and personal stories are fascinating. The earthy simple recipes are perfect for the home cook.

**"Home Creamery," by Kathy Farrell Kingsley**

Easy recipes for making your own fresh butter, yogurt, sour cream, cream cheese and many more dairy products. Perfect stocking stuffer for home cooks who like to start from scratch.

**"In Season," by Sarah Raven**

Cooking with fruits and vegetables by season. Keeps you focused on what is freshest during any given month. Perfect for vegetarians and carnivores alike, might get us all eating more produce.

**"Bon Appetit Y'All," by Virginia Willis**

Recipes and stories from three generations of southern cooking with over 200 recipes of southern and French (Virginia is a classically trained French chef) classics. Great stories as well.

**"Hello, Cupcake," by Karen Tack and Alan Richardson**

Really fun cupcake decorating ideas for kids and grownups with very useful "how to" photos.

**"Bakewise," by Shirley Corriher**

From the lady who all the chefs call when something goes wrong in the kitchen comes this indispensable book on "the hows and whys of successful baking" Shirley can explain the science behind every recipe and help you to avoid the common pitfalls.

**"More Fast Food My Way," by Jacques Pepin**

Jacques Pepin is one of my heroes. Not only is he the greatest kitchen technician on the planet (he can bone out a whole chicken in 20 seconds) but he is also one of the most prolific recipe developers -- he just keeps coming up with exciting, international, take-creative-advantage-of-the-supermarket recipes. And in this book, which is based on the second season of his new PBS series, they are all really quick and easy as well.

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