

Extra Helping: Recipes for Caring, Connecting, and Building Community One Dish at a Time

Janet Reich Elsbach

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Roost Books (Nov 20, 2018)

Softcover \$19.95 (256pp)

978-1-61180-602-1

The gift of a pot of hot, nourishing soup; a loaf of bread still warm from the oven; a salad of bright, crisp greens; or a rich chocolate pudding says “I care” in a way that words cannot. Written for those for whom cooking is an act of love, Janet Reich Elsbach’s cookbook isn’t organized in the familiar categories of breakfast, lunch, or dinner, or by main ingredients like meat, vegetables, or pasta, but by life events.

There are recipes designed to soothe a new mother’s frazzled nerves and welcome the new arrival; others are designed to comfort the grieving, nourish and cheer someone recovering from an illness, or celebrate life’s milestones. A gift of food brings meaningful presence when personal, social, or weather-related disasters have moved someone into the “Food for the Rearranged and Relocated” category—times when the gift of a “Life is Up-side Down Cake” would be most welcome. And under “Food for Cheer, Distraction, and Celebration” you’ll find a recipe for “A Herd of Mousse,” the arrival of which should lift anyone’s spirits. Cauldron-sized recipes are included to serve gatherings of extended family or the good folks volunteering to staff phone banks, organize rallies, or engage in community service.

Elsbach reminds caregivers that they need nurturing, too. And though it won’t always be a day at the spa, even a ten-minute break to read, enjoy a hot shower, or do “scream therapy” in the car can provide much-needed relief.

The multicultural recipes in *Extra Helping* supply something for every taste, with modifications suggested for special dietary needs, thoughtful ways to include instructions for preparation, and creative ideas to tempt children and picky eaters—all presented with a special touch of whimsy that makes each gift unique and memorable, nourishing the giver as well as the receiver.

KRISTINE MORRIS (November/December 2018)

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