

## ★ **Feasting: A New Take on Jewish Cooking**

**Amanda Ruben**

Hardie Grant (Mar 6, 2018)

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Restaurateur Amanda Ruben makes two generations of Ruben women who fell into cooking as a joyous career. Flipping through her tantalizing new cookbook, it's easy to understand why she was propelled to parlay her recipes, with their simultaneous interest in inheritance and invention, into a way of life.

The book leads off with potential holiday and hosting menus. They keep kashrut restrictions in mind, and grazing is presumed. Recipes are prefaced with a few lines each that contextualize their treats, both within Ruben's family story and within Jewish gastronomy as a whole. They bring the fun of feasting forward, using apt terms like "sexy" and "knobbly" to describe ingredients, and boasting as warranted: "If cooking is the way to a man's heart, then our pastrami is a direct injection."

Tradition is a given, but the book also brings deli techniques home, making it seem easy to oven smoke whitefish yourself or to transform a side of salmon—boned by your fishmonger—into lox. Instructions are brief and approachable. Some dishes require just a few ingredients each, and plenty can be completed the day before, for Shabbat consideration. Recipes pull from new traditions and outside cultures as well; quinoa salad done Ruben's way includes homemade sriracha. Pomegranates are here; so are Thai flavors.

Colors pop in the book's luscious, bright photographs, which move between highlighting beautiful seasonal ingredients and featuring tempting final products. Think: fried fish garnished with pine nuts and currants. Blanched asparagus with cheese, challah croutons, and duck eggs. Poached veal with saffron aioli. Accompaniments, like blood orange dressing, are simple and enticing.

*Jerusalem* meets Joan Nathan in *Feasting*, a playful, inviting addition to Jewish cooking libraries that is well worth passing down.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (March/April 2018)

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