

Fresh Fish: A Fearless Guide to Grilling, Shucking, Searing, Poaching, and Roasting Seafood

Jennifer Trainer Thompson

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New England cuisine and its piscine bounty are the stars of this outdoorsy new cookbook by acclaimed cookbook author Jennifer Trainer Thompson. At least half of the profusion of color photographs are shot by the shore, and one can almost feel and smell the salt spray of the ocean while flipping through the gorgeous compositions.

Freshness is the mantra of this cookbook, and Thompson provides expert advice about how to select and prep the best and tastiest fish and shellfish at the market, even if one lives thousands of miles from the Atlantic. Her recipes focus on ways to best capture the delicate flavors and textures of the fish in question, whether it's wood roasting for a whole striped bass, assembling a traditional clambake at the beach, or tucking crabmeat into a Puerto Rican style empanada. A generous dollop of recipes for side dishes, desserts and cocktails round out the fishy feasts. The recipes are simple and elegant and rely on the sweet, succulent, and briny flavors of the fish themselves and execution of proper preparation and cooking techniques.

The book reflects the resurgent interest in regional American food culture with many sidebars and photo essays about New England fishing communities, the importance of cod, oysters, and clams in the local history, economy, and culture, and sustainable seafood practices. These visually and literarily interesting counterpoints spice up the standard cookbook format of introduction and recipe. The author zips things up further with fun quotes, interviews, and personal memories of many summers spent with her "Swamp Yankee" relatives at the Massachusetts shore.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (Summer 2016)

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