

The Backyard Homestead Book of Kitchen Know-How

Andrea Chesman

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Straightforward and matter-of-fact, Chesman communicates the joy and satisfaction to be experienced in a homestead kitchen.

“There is always something going on in the homestead kitchen,” claims Andrea Chesman. From fermented kimchee to raised bread to dried fruits and vegetables, the homestead kitchen honors harvest, hard work, and good food. With extensive information on utilizing the bounty of home gardens, bee keeping, animal husbandry, tapped trees, and so much more, this book offers the serious homesteader, as well as the weekend wannabe, detailed and specific instructions on how to use and store all that the homestead has to offer.

Some may recognize Chesman from her blog, *Roots and Leaves*; her association with *Mother Earth News*; and/or her many cookbooks, most recently *The Pickled Pantry* and *Recipes from the Root Cellar*. Chesman introduces the book simply by extolling the virtues of homesteading: saved money, glorious bounty, better food, self-sufficiency, community, a compelling sense of accomplishment and self-worth, greater variety, and a smaller carbon footprint.

Chesman divides the book into three parts: “Getting the Most from Fresh Food,” “Food Preservation,” and “Homestead Cooking.” Each section offers an introduction to a vast array of topics to get people started. Generally formatted as columns, the sections have clear headings and nicely detailed illustrations. The book features particular “Step-by-Step” sections that break down more complex introductions with visuals. While the final chapter hosts a small gathering of recipes, other recipes appear in various chapters as Chesman discusses them, like sourdough starter or fruit liquor. Insider tips appear in boxes, instructing readers on the best way to clean up a dropped egg or to defeat weevils by adding bay leaves to grains.

Straightforward and matter-of-fact, Chesman does not hide the work necessary for success in the homestead kitchen, but she communicates the joy and satisfaction such activities can bring. The book is easy to use, with a full index making quick reference a snap.

With its diversity of topics and user-friendly format, this book will grace the reference shelf for years to come, whether readers are searching for recipes, harvest tips, or a guide to spatchcocking a bird.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (Winter 2016)

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