

The Potatopia Cookbook: 77 Recipes Starring the Humble Potato

Allen Dikker

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The Potatopia Cookbook successfully introduces home cooks to the wide world of potato cookery.

Potatoes are everywhere, and in *The Potatopia Cookbook*, Allen Dikker takes readers on a culinary journey guided by the simple, often underappreciated tuber. He presents seventy-seven potato-based recipes, ranging from appetizers all the way through to dessert. Along the way comes tasty photography, adding to the overall appeal of the cookbook.

The book begins with a brief history of Dikker's own journey. The son of Ukrainian immigrants who served potatoes with every meal, he owned a successful advertising company that failed following the recession of 2008. That gave him the time and impetus to find his true passion: cooking. He went on to open Potatopia, a thriving chain of fast-casual restaurants that focus on the myriad means of cooking a potato.

While most of the cookbook is made up of recipes, there are also helpful and informative chapters on the history of potatoes, on different types of potatoes, on choosing and storing potatoes, and on the different knife cuts that can be used with them.

Two appendices cover the basics, including how to make a good mashed potato—a skill that all should have, and which *The Potatopia Cookbook* aptly provides guidance on—and recipes for various sauces to pair with potatoes.

Recipes are appealing and fairly straightforward, for dishes like potato-crustured shrimp with tartar sauce. Most require little technical cooking ability. Each recipe comes with a short introduction filled with background or other information, adding a nice personal note. Professional chefs may disagree with some of the techniques and advice that come throughout, but most of the content is solid.

Many recipes are followed by “Allen’s Tip,” providing extra, helpful information. The book’s refreshing, interesting ideas are a plus. It is impossible not to appreciate the inclusion of a brief chapter incorporating potatoes in desserts—efforts that do not involve the standard sweet potato pie, but instead concoctions like sweet potato blondies with vanilla ice cream and hazelnuts.

Though it may not be of interest to professional chefs, *The Potatopia Cookbook* successfully introduces home cooks to the wide world of potato cookery and will be a perfect addition to personal cookbook collections.

ERIC PATTERSON (January/February 2018)

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