

The Tutka Bay Lodge Cookbook: Coastal Cuisine from the Wilds of Alaska

Kirsten Dixon

Mandy Dixon

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The gorgeous design of this cookbook will transport chefs to the Alaskan coast, where tasty, surprisingly elegant recipes await.

In their second cookbook collaboration, mother and daughter Kirsten and Mandy Dixon take readers inside the operation of their summer lodge, located a ferry ride away from Homer, Alaska. *The Tutka Bay Lodge Cookbook* contains one hundred recipes from the classically-trained chefs, with photos of nearly every finished dish, as well as many anecdotes about their travels, cooking classes, seafood, wine pairings, and other bits of culinary advice.

Running Tutka Bay Lodge is a family affair; Mandy is the pastry chef, her sister Carly runs the wellness programs, and the menfolk keep the lodge stocked with food and supplies and take guests on field trips aboard their boats and planes. Carly's husband, Tyrone Potgieter, also took all of the food photographs for this cookbook.

This beautifully designed volume is as much a showcase for its wild Alaskan setting as it is for the Dixon's culinary creations. The abundant photographs of food, natural landscapes, wildlife, and flora are shot through with luminous northern light. A cool palette of background colors for the recipe pages is accented by the bright jewel-toned backgrounds of the anecdote pages. The cookbook is generously sized, not only encouraging leisurely browsing but also adding to the atmospheric quality. Full-page, close-up shots of huevos rancheros and scallops would be more visually appealing at a reduced size, and some other food photographs, which are off-center or have their sharpest bits at the margins, seem a little too artsy for a cookbook, where the aim is to draw readers into the recipe rather than having them focus on an image.

The cookbook is organized into sections that reflect the meals served at the lodge: breakfast, lunch, cocktail-hour tidbits, and dinner, with additional chapters on pantry favorites and favorite cooking-school recipes. There are many Tutka Bay takes on traditional crowd pleasers, like Halibut Sliders, but also many unusual recipes that reflect the local ingredients and sense of place, like Sea Lettuce Relish, Bull Whip Kelp Sweet and Spicy Pickles, Homemade Sea Salt, and Salmon with Miso Butter Pasta.

The Tutka Bay Lodge Cookbook is a food book to luxuriate over. Home cooks will delight in the happy dilemma of choosing which tempting recipe to make first, while others will be visually transported to this gorgeous spot nestled in the southern Alaskan coast.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (Winter 2015)

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