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Foreword Review COOKING

Wood-Fired Cooking: Techniques and Recipes for the Grill, Backyard Oven, Fireplace, and Campfire

Mary Karlin

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When food meets fire, difficult to digest vegetables and meats become more palatable, a technique which helped our species accrue much-needed nutrients and evolve. Anthropologists tell us we have two million years of experience manning the wood-fired grill, but they're not certain whether early man and woman had as much fun as modern folk, beer in hand. Spits and fire-pits, grilling, roasting, and smoking: these are fire-fighting words and the stuff of Mary Karlin's new book. *Wood-Fired Cooking* is an exhaustingly researched and inspiring invitation for anyone to rub two sticks together. A traveling cooking instructor at various cooking schools, spas, camps, and restaurants around the country, Karlin also directs the Live-Fire Cooking Camp Culinary Center in Superior, Arizona.

Wood-Fired Cooking's first three chapters are devoted to short primers on all the open fire cooking techniques of note, as well as a historical discussion on the first grills, underground earthen pits, and chamber ovens—the vertical, the dome, and the egg-shaped. We learn about types of hardwoods and fruitwoods and their respective flavor profile, heat level, and coaling profile. Lilac, for example, offers a "very light and floral" flavor profile and medium heat level, all of which is excellent for seafood and lamb. Later chapters include "Wood-Fired Grilling," "Wood-Fired Roasting," "Baking Flatbreads and Rustic Artisan Breads," "Campfire Cooking," and "Clay Pot and Cast-Iron Oven Cooking." Karlin includes more than 100 recipes from "Grilled Flank Steak with Red Peppers and Fontina Cheese" to "Grilled Fruit Chutney," and "Blackberry Grunt"—the one-dish wonders at campfires everywhere.

MATT SUTHERLAND (June 15, 2009)

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