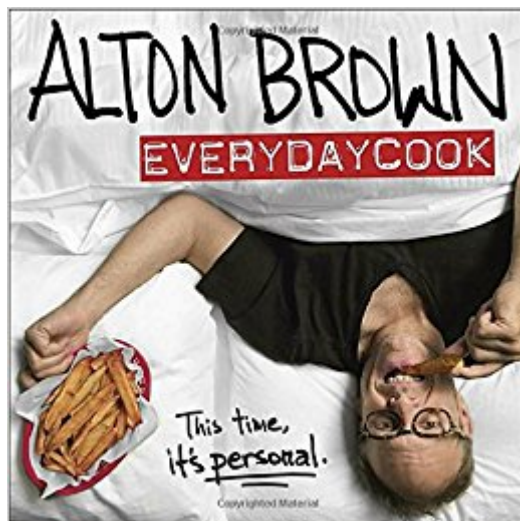


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Alton Brown: EveryDayCook



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
It's my first in a few years because I've been a little busy with TV stuff and interwebs stuff and live stage show stuff. Sure, I've been cooking, but it's been mostly to feed myself and people in my immediate vicinity—which is really what a cook is supposed to do, right? Well, one day I was sitting around trying to organize my recipes, and I realized that I should put them into a personal collection. One thing led to another, and here's *EveryDayCook*. There's still plenty of science and hopefully some humor in here (my agent says that's my "wheelhouse"), but unlike in my other books, a lot of attention went into the photos, which were all taken on my iPhone (take that, Instagram) and are suitable for framing. As for the recipes, which are arranged by time of day, they're pretty darned tasty. Highlights include:
Morning: Buttermilk Lassi, Overnight Coconut Oats, Nitrous Pancakes
Coffee Break: Cold Brew Coffee, Lacquered Bacon, Seedy Date Bars
Noon: Smoky the Meat Loaf, Grilled Cheese Grilled Sandwich, "Enchiladas" or "Lasagna" or "Lasagna" or "Lasagna"
Afternoon: Green Grape Cobbler, Crispy Chickpeas, Savory Greek Yogurt Dip
Evening: Bad Day Bitter Martini, Mussels-O-Miso, Garam Masala Steaks
Anytime: The General's Fried Chicken, Roasted Chile Salsa, Peach Punch Pops
Later: Cider House Fondue, Open Sesame Noodles, Chococalypse Cookie
So let's review: 101 recipes with mouthwatering photos, a plethora of useful insights on methods, tools, and ingredients all written by an "award-winning and influential educator and tastemaker." That last part is from the PR office. Real people don't talk like that.

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Customer Reviews

Alton Brown used to direct TV commercials and cook on the side. Then he got the crazy idea to go to culinary school and reinvent the food show. The result: *Good Eats*, which kept Brown gainfully employed for fifteen years and earned him a Peabody Award. Along the way he also hosted *Iron Chef America* and *Feasting on Asphalt* and wrote seven books in his spare time. In 2013 he launched a live culinary variety show called *The Edible Inevitable* tour, which played to sold out theaters across the United States. In the spring of 2016, Brown's new live show, *Eat Your Science*, toured forty U.S. cities. Brown also hosts the insanely popular *Cutthroat Kitchen* on Food Network.

One of the things that I've always appreciated about Alton Brown is that he takes the time not just to explain the "how" of cooking, but also the "why". I've always enjoyed AB's sense of humor, pop culture references, and food science nerdism. That said, I kinda felt I had moved on in the gap between the *Good Eats* books and this. With *EveryDayCook* (EDC going forward), AB shows that he has moved on as well. While EDC still contains all the cleverness and food geek knowledge of his previous works, there has been a clear evolution as he has learned more over the years -- both from personal and dietary experience and from techniques he no doubt picked up hosting *Iron Chef America*. You will find in EDC certain ingredients, tools and methods that may be new to you. For the most part, that's a good thing. While AB certainly doesn't go full-on modernist cuisine, he definitely dips his toe in the pool with such things as the use of a whipping siphon and the use of metric measurements. Which brings me to one of the issues people may have with this book. In a number of recipes, AB uses metric measurements (which will bother some "traditional" home cooks). In some recipes, he'll use a combination of measurements: quantity (3 eggs), volume (1 cup of milk), and weight (55g clarified butter). If weight is critical to the success of a recipe, then you're going to have to grab that digital scale - ideally accurate to a tenth of a gram. If it's not going to impact the recipe, AB will give you the measurement in the easiest and most convenient way. It sure would have been nice, though, for him to give approximate quantities or volume equivalents when he provides metric weights. When making the apple spice bundt cake, for example, I would have known to have 3 sticks of butter at room temperature to hit the required 336 grams. Another thing AB

does in EDC that may strike some as odd, but after you give it a moment of thought you'll recognize the sense to it, is that he organizes the book in terms of what time of day you'll be eating - breakfast, lunch, dinner, and the times in between. Rather than a section on pork or poultry, he thinks the way most of us do, i.e. "what should we have for dinner?" Furthermore, most of the recipes are not overly complex. AB wants this to be a book you can use any (or every) day. Many times he succeeds; a number of times he does not. There are some issues I have with these recipes and the way they are presented. Many of them are simply NOT "everyday" recipes. The process for the amaranth wafers took 4 hours from start to finish (more on that below in the "update"). Sadly, the recipes do not list "total time" and "active time" in minutes, so it's hard to be sure of what kind of commitment you're looking at when you start. The recipes are written in paragraph form, with no additional spacing between steps or bolding of the step number, so they sort of blend together into a mass of text. It's almost like AB transcribed his hand-written notes into this cookbook. This brings me to the photography in EDC, which is a double edged sword. It's wonderful, copious, and pretty amazing that it was all done with a smartphone. Unfortunately, a great many recipes are printed on top of these photos, making the recipes even more difficult to read. Ultimately, those hoping for Good Eats Volume 4 are going to find themselves wondering "what happened to the Alton I thought I knew?" Those of us who are curious about how AB has personally evolved as a cook over the last handful of years will likely enjoy this book a great

deal.-----On-Going Updates (Dec 5, 2016): I'll continue to update this review as I work through the recipes, providing my thoughts on those I find note-worthy. - Amaranth Wafers: Ever have a food that you can't tell if you like or not (you'll say "this tastes interesting"), but then can't stop eating it? That's amaranth wafers. While I'm glad I made these, this is NOT an everyday recipe. You will need to candy some orange peel for this recipe (this takes a while and yields enough for 2 batches of these cookies), and AB's instructions for removing the orange rind strike me as the most difficult way to do it -- at least for this recipe. Further, following the recipe left me with a "batter" that did not stick together at all. Adding an additional egg and 2TBs of butter yielded a batter that held together wonderfully. The first time you make this recipe, expect it to take about 4 hours. At least half of that is "active" time. - Barley Water: I include this only because it is one of the recipes that AB promotes in one of his recent podcasts. As I drank it, I thought "this reminds me of a home remedy for irregularity". It is essentially a thick, somewhat bland lemonade. Yet strangely, after my first glass, I wanted more. Perhaps my body just craves fiber. Also, I'm not sure why AB recommends a 3 quart pitcher when the yield is around a quart and a half. - Cold Brewed Coffee (edited 10/29/2016): Wonderful, but if you like iced coffee, just get a Toddy Cold

Brew System. It will take you about the same amount of time to brew up an entire pitcher of iced coffee concentrate as it does to make a serving from AB's recipe.- Scrambled Eggs 3.0: Truly an "everyday" recipe. Super fast, super easy, super yummy. I don't prefer them to Ruhlman's or Blumenthal's double boiler scrambled eggs, but these take a fraction of the time and are still fantastic. This really felt like a "Good Eats" recipe, and I mean that as high praise.- Apple Spice Bundt Cake: Extraordinary! The flavor of this cake almost defies description. Who'd have thought that you could use rosemary in a cake? The spices blend together so subtly that it would take a sophisticated palate to recognize them all. I thought that a cake that used 3 sticks of butter would have been a little more moist. The next time I make it, I think I'll throw in a little macadamia nut oil. And maybe boost the rum content of the frosting. Also, this is not really an "everyday" recipe, but definitely a great weekend recipe. Between grinding all of our spices, dicing and shredding apple and chopping ginger and pecan, just getting the ingredients prepped took over 30 minutes. But man, oh man, it was worth it.- Garam Marsalmon Steaks: I have a confession -- I HATE salmon. I pretty much would need to be starving to eat salmon. And yet I found this recipe very edible. I "grilled" these inside on cast iron rather than on a grill, and my wife (who likes salmon) absolutely loved these. The recipe recommends applying the spice blend liberally. I held back a bit and would say that the recipe is right -- the spice blend will not overpower the fish, even if applied like a rub. On cast iron, it forms a wonderful crust. This recipe was very easy and definitely qualifies as "everyday".- Chicken Parmesan Balls and Weekday Spaghetti: I group these together because of the significant overlap between the recipes (the herb oil and sauce are the same). If you have already prepared the herb oil, both of these become "everyday" recipes (the spaghetti more so). I honestly found the spaghetti sauce a little under-powered, flavor-wise. It tasted "fresh" and "authentic", but I just didn't get the herbal punch from the oil that I had hoped for. Don't be afraid of using two anchovies in the sauce -- I promise that it won't taste fishy. The CPBs were very good, though I think they would be even better formed into patties (more surface area to crust up the panko/parmesan) and made into sandwiches. I also confess that I topped this meal with triple the recommended mozzarella (see the pic), but hey, I'm from Wisconsin.- "The Last Pizza Dough I'll Ever Need" - Those are AB's words, not mine. While it won't be the last dough I ever need, it certainly makes for an excellent pizza crust. AB has created a recipe that is extremely easy to make, very easy to handle and shape, and achieves the magical crust attributes of being both crispy and chewy. The crust is crisp enough that it doesn't buckle under the weight of ingredients, yet still retains a very satisfying chew. I've made better tasting pizza crust (typically with 00-Antimo Caputo flour) but not by much, and it wasn't as simple as this. This recipe definitely falls under the category

of "everyday" assuming you spent 10 minutes the prior day prepping the dough. Be aware that the crust on this recipe goes from "almost done" to "burned" very rapidly. Keep an eye on it.- Breakfast Carbonara (Dec 5) - Pasta for breakfast, really? I tried this recipe because it was another that AB hyped in one of his podcasts. It was, in a word, delightful. See the picture below. This is definitely a "everyday" recipe, requiring less than 30 minutes to make, and is one of those recipes you can parallel task, prepping all of the components simultaneously and bring them together at the end. Though I would have liked it to be saucier (I may add cream to the egg/cheese mixture next time), that might detract from how light this dish is.

I'll start by saying that I'm a big fan of Alton Brown and have enjoyed his previous cookbooks that helped to transform me from a kitchen noob to a semi-decent home cook. With his latest book (circa 2016) I appreciated that this was more of a personal collection of his favorite concoctions and the accompanying presentation is top notch with thick, matte paper showcasing the creatively framed full colored photography on every page. What I found lacking however was the recipe's accessibility level that in previous volumes was truly a hallmark feature. In most instances here, Alton tends to go with esoteric apparatus and methodology to bring his creations to life and while this usually makes for captivating and amusing viewing on TV - within these pages intended for a home cook his methodology often comes across as gaudy and unnecessary.

Love, love, love me some Alton Brown. Bought this for my husband, he's going to love it. I'm also happy I got a first print with the "misprints" in it because now I have a collector's edition. Wooot woot!

Every photo in the book was taken on an iPhone. Somehow, that's important to the book...but I can't really explain why. It helps to explain the aesthetic, the style, the...feel of the book. I have most of Brown's other cookbooks, and this one feels most genuine. That's partly because some of the recipes are reworked versions of ones from previous books, and partly because so many of them are just so...different. I loved watching the amaranth pop (like teeny tiny popcorn!), and the byproduct of the candied orange peel: orange simple syrup. I bought some seltzer the next day and make a nice, subtle orange soda, totally homemade. I'd put some orange juice in next time, but man, it was still tasty. And that's what this book is about: not just about how Alton Brown makes food, but about how you can make something your own. If you don't like the amaranth wafers (which taste good but are dry for my palate), then add some moisture as another reviewer did. If you don't like

the barley water (which I thought was perfect), add something sweet. And don't toss the barely, make a salad or something! If this review seems disjointed, that's because it's meant to be. Not because the book is disjointed, but because it feels organic. It feels real, like a real conversation you'd have with a real person. And when you're having a conversation with someone, part of it might be about letting them talk, but part of it is about letting you talk too. Alton said of this book "If you don't like this book, then you don't like me", and to that I'd say "Even if you don't like parts of this book, realize that a conversation needs at least two people. Alton has said his bit, now it's your turn to talk back"

By reading the how to do and logic of what to do and why he did it has allowed me to think in crooked lines about food preparation. I believe this book has made me a more inventive better cook and I will be trying new foods and techniques.

Good recipes and a fun read. The tips are useful and I've made about 1/4 of the recipes so far. They've all been good, as expected. The kitchen basics he discusses are probably a bit much for most people to keep on hand. And I will say that "everyday" to me would mean quick, since I am not a chef for a living, but that is not what a lot of these recipes are.

This book is nothing less than I have come to expect from Alton. Everything is layed out well and explained, and I love the sections that go into the science of everything with the food and the kitchen gadgets. I absolutely love it, every recipe I have tried so far has come out exactly as I expected and fantastic.

Interesting recipes however we just don't have the space or the money for all of the gadgets and special ingredients. Love his cooking show more. I learn so much.

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