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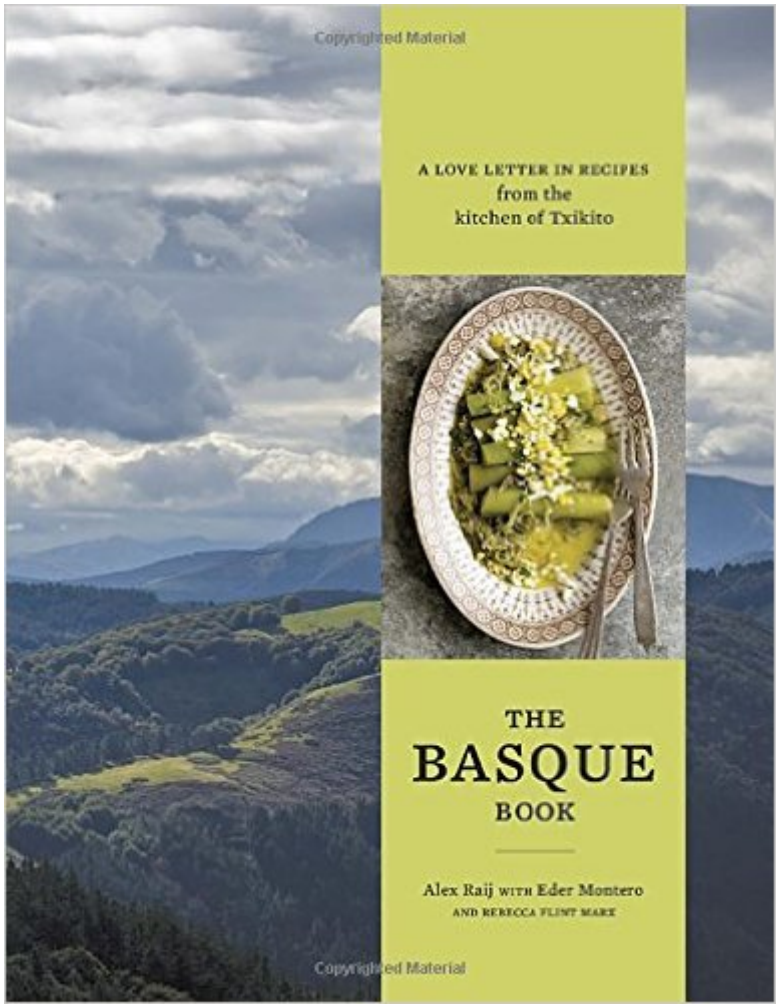
The Basque Book: A Love Letter In Recipes From The Kitchen Of Txikito



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Synopsis

Whether itâ ™s a perfectly ripe summer tomato served with just a few slivers of onion and a drizzle of olive oil, salt cod slowly poached in oil and topped with an emulsion of its own juices, or a handful of braised leeks scattered with chopped egg, Basque cooking is about celebrating humble ingredients by cooking them to exquisite perfection.Chefs Alexandra Raij and Eder Montero are masters of this art form, and their New York City restaurant Txikito is renowned for its revelatory preparations of simple ingredients. In this much-anticipated and deeply personal debut, Raij and Montero share more than one hundred recipes from Txikitoâ ”all inspired Â by the home cooking traditions of the Basque Countryâ ”that will change the way you cook.Dishes like Salt Cod in Pil Pil sauce have fewer than five ingredients yet will astonish you with their deeply layered textures and elegant flavors. By followingÂ Raijâ ™s careful but encouraging instructions, you can even master Squid in Its Own Inkâ ”a rite of passage for Basque home cooks, and another dish that will amaze you with its richness and complexity. The Basque Book is a love letter: to the Basque Country, which inspired these recipes and continues to inspire top culinary minds from around the world; to ingredients high and low; and to the craft of cooking well. Read this book, make Basque food, learn to respect ingredientsâ ”and, quite simply, you will become a better cook.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Basque Book by Alexandra Raij and Eder Montero is far more than a cookbook. ItÃ¢Â Â™s a primer on a new approach to cookery, an exploration of Basque cuisine and culture and a love story. There is more personal narrative and explanatory text than the average cookbook. The latter

is important because Basque cuisine does have a few significant differences that set it apart.For example, I have never considered brining onions in cold salt water prior to cooking in order to season them more effectively. The onion sauce that is the base of many recipes is new to me, as is the heavy use of salt and olive oil. For example, using a couple tablespoons of salt on a steak? Who would do that? Well, these chefs would before cooking and then brush most of it off so the steak is not salty, but beautifully seasoned.There is a chapter on some foundational ingredients and sauces in Basque cooking, on the whole Basque approach. I think itÃ¢Â Â™s something worth reading twice over because it has the potential of shifting how you cook, not just in these recipes but in your daily cooking. This cuisine has a very different foundation than what I am used to, so in that aspect, the book was a revelation.This is definitely a book for seafood lovers. ThereÃ¢Â Â™s lots of recipes with anchovies, though mostly anchovies in oil. My Swedish cooking background makes me shudder a bit because I want my anchovies in water or in salt. However, they recipes call for salting the anchovies to firm up the flesh so thereÃ¢Â Â™s that. But thereÃ¢Â Â™s a lot more than anchovies. ThereÃ¢Â Â™s cod, mussels, crab and every other fishy thing you can think of, it seems.There are a few, not many, recipes with other meats. She details a way of cooking steak that I am eager to try. I mean, if the pages of this book could be flavored, that page looked like the best steak on the planet. I have never cooked a steak that way, never heard of cooking a steak that way, but I can almost taste it. Unfortunately, my budget is not stretching to big rib steaks, so I will just imagine it for now.Normally I test the most tempting instead of the most questionable recipes before I write my reviews. For lunch today, I made the Potato and Romano Bean Stew. I chose that recipe to test for this review because it sounded so unlikely. Can the broth really be rich in that cooking time with just some salt? Reading it, I was not able to picture it being particularly delicious. ItÃ¢Â Â™s so simple and unadorned. Could it really work? My thinking is that if this recipe as delicious as the introduction promises, then Raij and Montego are miracle workers.As an aside, slicing the garlic paper thin made me think of Pauly in Goodfellas. True confessions, I did not use a razor.Well, they were right. I just ate a bowl and am going to have a second. It is delicious and so simple, easy and affordable, some potatoes, beans, salt, garlic and olive oil. Of course, that is the theme of this cookbook, there are many layers of flavor in simple ingredients if they are prepared with intention.If you love to cook, this is one of the cookbooks you simply must have because it will change the way you cook in subtle ways. I am eager to try incorporating the Basque way of preparing onions into other foods, not just these recipes, but into other cuisines to see how elevating that basic ingredient will add depth and richness to those recipes. I have depended so much on mirepoix in creating new recipes and making standard dishes, but perhaps I might try sofrito instead

and see where that takes me. I am excited, not just by these recipes, but to see how my own cookery evolves with these new basics.I received a copy of The Basque Book from the publisher via Blogging For Books.

ISent from my iPadBasque, an area in northern Spain which conjures up images of sheep, shepherds, and shepherd bread. Alas, no shepherd's bread here, but there is so much more. The authors engagingly and enthusiastically discuss some typical Basque foods and customs.The primary author, Alexandra Raij, has Argentinian parents and married Eder Montero, who grew up in the Basque region. Together they run the successful Basque restaurant, Txikito, in New York City. This book lovingly presents 114 intriguing recipes reflecting their interpretation of Basque cuisine.The book is divided into chapters:1. Fundamental techniques and ingredients featuring fantastic special sauces.2. Pintxos: roughly the Basque equivalent of tapas such as gratin of deviled crab.3. Huerta: vegetables like okra with tomato sauce and minted yogurt.4. Huevos: eggs, from poached in chorizo broth to "messy" with potatoes.5. Buscando bakalao: seafood, especially the favorite salted cod.6. Putxero, sopa, and potaje, that is soups and stews: lentils with chorizo for one.7. Txokos, asadores, sagardotegis, and fereas: men's gastronomic society, restaurants, and harvest festival. This was a fascinating chapter regarding Basque social life as well as recipes. Paprika-marinated pork loin roast sounds wonderful.8. Goxua: sweets consisting of an interesting variety from milk junket to yeast buns.9. Bibidas: what they drinkI made three great recipes: EDER'S AVOCADO SALAD: We liked this way of serving avocados-- quick, tasty, and different with balsamic vinegar, smoked paprika, and olive oil. SWEET SOFT SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH FLOWERING GARLIC CHIVES AND SHRIMP: This made a relatively fast, satisfying, and interesting light meal. BREAKFAST YOGURT CAKE: I made the olive oil and yogurt cake with rhubarb, and it was a keeper. Do make sure Greek yogurt is used in the recipe as specified. I was uneasy at first as usually when one bakes with an acid such as yogurt, baking soda is used; however, the recipe worked without it. The batter did not fit in my pan, so I made a couple of cupcakes as well, adjusting the baking time. I am thrilled to have another good rhubarb recipe. The photography is wonderful; however, out of 114 recipes, only about 44 images depict prepared foods. I know what a pile of crabs looks like, but what does piquillo peppers stuffed with cod look like? For this reason, the rating loses a star. This is a cookbook, after all. I really like The Basque Book. I got a feeling of the people and their cuisine. The recipes have a simple list of ingredients, are well-written, and are not complicated. Some, I will never make such as squid in its ink and Chinatown-style periwinkles, but it was fun reading about them. In addition, there are a number of

other recipes I would like to make. I recommend this book if one is looking for some different adventures in dining. I received a copy of this book from blogging for books. These are my own unbiased opinions.

This cook book is a pure joy! The recipes, commentary, and photos are simple honest, and quite frankly delicious.A collogue of mine was from the basque heritage and used to speak of the food and cooking tradition with such sincerity and love that this book called out to me right away, I had to find out about this treasure. And a treasure it this book is!The recipes are "home cook" approachable with the end result being incredible flavor profiles and a bit of adventure. The offerings range from a section on eggs (thank you!) to meats, beverages, and sweets. Making homemade squid ink sauce may not be something you think you can do, but you CAN!This guide is filled, and I mean filled, with original and incredible tasting dishes that are sure to be a journey and delight in your kitchen. There are incredible descriptions to see you through and seasonal menus that won't disappoint.

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