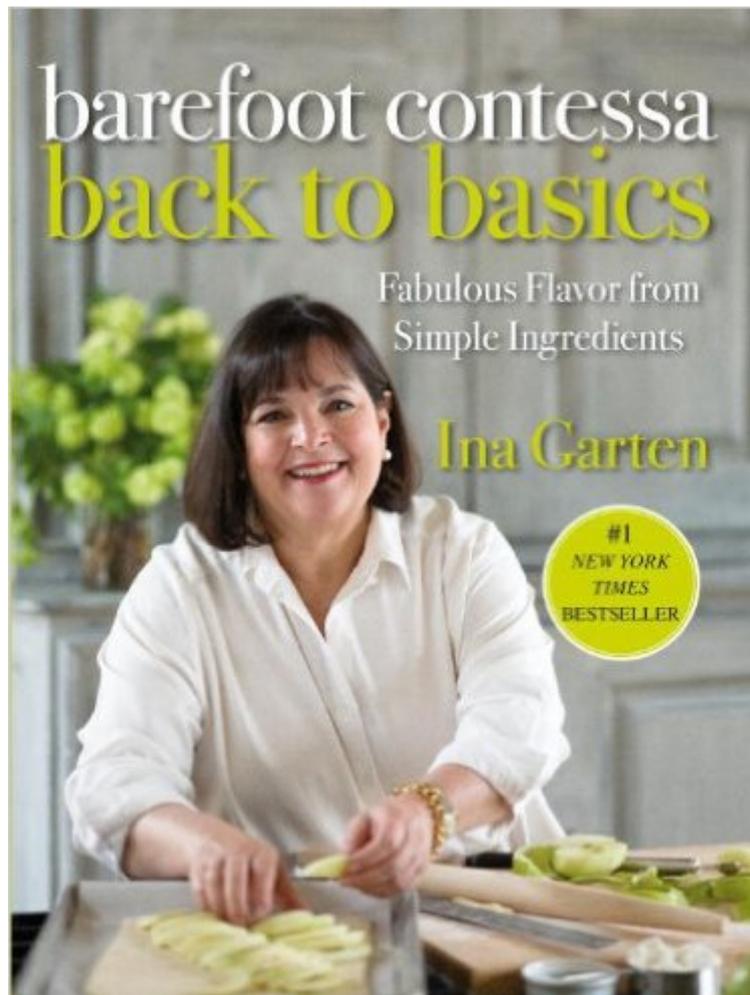


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Barefoot Contessa Back To Basics: Fabulous Flavor From Simple Ingredients



Synopsis

Barefoot Contessa Back to Basics, Fabulous Flavor from Simple Ingredients By Ina Garten "Barefoot Contessa Back to Basics is the essential Ina Garten cookbook, focusing on the techniques behind her elegant food and easy entertaining style, and offering nea

Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Clarkson Potter; First Edition edition (October 28, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1400054354

ISBN-13: 978-1400054350

Product Dimensions: 7.7 x 0.9 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (457 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #9,155 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > U.S. Regional](#) #68 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Methods > Quick & Easy](#)

Customer Reviews

One of the things that I enjoy most about Ina's books is the beginning of each section. She does not jump into the recipes; she prepares you likened to a good orchestra conductor preparing before a recital; making sure she has gotten everything in order before presenting her work. Once she gets the essence of what she wishes to tell you into words, then will she begin the recipe process. That being said, this book continues the appreciation that so many people for Ina, along with the superb photography she wants to help bring the flavors, colors, and joy of her ideas and foods. And as Ina states in her dedication, "simple food has the most style". Indeed it does. Her "Acknowledgement" page has all the secrets of why her books are so successful.....great book and cooking industry people, great photography ("I want you to see the photograph and feel like licking the page") and her great husband, Jeffrey (can't ever imagine one without the other). Her "Introduction" is its own chapter in that you are given her ideas and thoughts behind how she approaches the dining table and the dining experience. She will opt for the simplest, yet freshest foods, whether for a casual or formal dinner. And she helps us to thin out some of the detailed concerns with how we want the table to look and instead, think of how the food should be prepared. This will help us come away with an appreciation for a simpler meal with the atmosphere automatically settling in as you go

along. A real treat in this book is her great new "cooking barn" (don't think hay and horses with a stove nearby but instead a fabulous, sleek, warm, inviting, rustic, yet modern edifice, that is totally Ina). As you read each chapter, she doesn't just give recipes; she gives side lessons with the hints and insights that she has honed over the years that have made her successful, not just in the sense of financial or in her celebrity, but as a cook/chef/hostess or whatever jumble of adjectives you want to use to describe her. Garnishes, menu ideas, floral arrangements, things to do and NOT to do for a party; thoughts as such that will up the ante on what will make your gathering successful in terms of satisfaction for yourself and your guests.

COCKTAIL HOUR Parmesan and thyme crackers, Campari orange spritzer, gravlax with mustard sauce, juice of a few flowers, roasted shrimp cocktail, pomegranate cosmopolitans, savory palmiers, mango banana daiquiris, bruschetta with peppers and gorgonzola

SOUPS (one of her best sections) Lobster corn chowder, cream of fresh tomato soup, homemade chicken stock, roasted potato leek soup, chilled cucumber soup, pappa al pomodoro (this sounds so much more romantic than saying tomato soup, doesn't it), roasted butternut squash soup, Italian wedding soup

LUNCH Cape Cod chopped salad, old-fashioned carrot salad, white pizzas with arugula, creamy cucumber salad, warm goat cheese in phyllo, roasted butternut squash salad, roasted tomato caprese salad, tomato and goat cheese tarts, truffled filet of beef sandwiches, roasted pears with bue cheese, mache with warm brie (a salad)

DINNER Tuscan lemon chicken, roasted turkey roulade, chicken bouillabaisse, coq au vin, company pot roast, Niman Ranch burgers, French bistro steaks, Parker's beef stew, herb-marinated loin of prok, baked shrimp scampi, easy sole meuniere, bay scallops gratins, Indonesian grilled swordfish, mustard-roasted fish, soft-shell crab sandwiches, prosciutto roasted bass, pasta with pecorino and peppers, wild mushroom risotto (dee-vine!), spring green risotto, dinner spanokopita, tagliarelle with truffle butter

VEGGIES Maple-roasted buttercream squash, confetti corn, creamy cheddar grits, orange pecan wild rice, baked potatoes with yogurt, celery root and apple puree, oven-roasted vegetables, parmesan-roasted broccoli, chive risotto cakes, pan-roasted root vegetables, roasted parsnips and carrots, baked sweet potato fries, roasted tomatoes with basil, garlic ciabatta bread (this will pretty much replace any bruschetta)

DESSERTS (yipee!) French apple tart, fresh lemon mousse, apple dried cherry turnovers, chocolate-dipped strawberries, french chocolate bark, old-fashioned gingerbread, plum crunch, honey vanilla pound cake, fresh raspberry gratins, pumpkin roulade, raisin pecan oatmeal cookies, affogato sundaes (ice cream, liqueur and whip cream), brownie pudding

Had enough? Not just yet because you can't forget:

BREAKFASTS Sunrise smoothies, country French omelet, buttermilk cheddar biscuits, baked blintzes, homemade muesli, tri-berry oven pancakes, whitefish salad, easy sticky buns, homemade granola bars, blueberry streusel

muffins, date nut spice bread, fruit salad with limoncello, easy strawberry jam Flavor Boosters FAQ Sources Credits Sources Barn Sources (to dream and possibly build your own "Cooking Barn" too) Menu's Index This latest addition to your Ina library is wonderful and will add more to your simple and fresh repertoire of foodstuffs. Bon appetit!

Cookbooks are so much fun to read. Every author will have different approaches and even provide differing recipes for the same dish. The comparisons are fascinating. Today, I'm marinating chicken in the old "fireman's barbecue" sauce. Over times, I've collected a variety of recipes for this single sauce, and it's fun to experiment, compare, and finally select the one I like best. Same with cookbooks. . . . In essence, the author, Ina Garten, lays out her approach in the following quotations (both from Page 11): ". . . I don't see any reason why we can't buy perfectly good ingredients in a grocery store, cook them simply, and serve an absolutely delicious meal that will delight everyone at the table." And, "What truly fires my imagination is taking ordinary ingredients and cooking them--or pairing them--in a way that `unlocks' their true flavors." She also argues strongly in favor of cooking by the season, since different foods are at their most flavorful at different times. Earlier, I quoted her as saying that certain ingredients unlock flavor. Among the "unlockers," she says, are Reggiano Parmesan cheese, wine vinegar, freshly squeezed lemon juice, Pernod, coffee, cream, etc. Throughout the book, Garten scatters "Top 10" lists, such as the "10 No-cook things to serve with drinks," "Top 10 Flavor Boosters," and "10 Things Not to Serve at a Dinner Party." But let's take a look at some of the recipes. I enjoy Potato Leek Soup, and have tried out several different recipes (enjoying all). Garten adds a new one to my collection. One ingredient that distinguishes hers from others is the use of arugula. Delicious. Her "Creamy Cucumber Salad" is another little treasure, featuring hothouse cucumbers, red onions, yogurt, sour cream, vinegar, dill, and black pepper. I have not yet made this, but find that it sounds delightful as a starter for a meal. "Coq au Vin" is one of my favorite tried and true French recipes. Garten provides her recipe, basing it on a Beef Bourguignon. As her producer once said, triggering the experiment, "Well, [coq au vin] is just beef bourguignon with chicken." Boy, this sounds interesting, richer than the normal recipe that I use. Finally, one more example, "Parmesan-Roasted Broccoli." I try out a lot of broccoli dishes, and varying how I prepare them, from steaming to grilling to stir frying. Her version features roasting broccoli with pine nuts, parmesan cheese, and basil leaves. All in all, a fine cookbook. Garten lays out her views on cooking at the outset and then illustrates how to implement those views in her recipe collection. People who want to create tasty dishes without major hassles will find this a good cookbook to add to their collection.

I waited eagerly for this, the sixth of Ina Garten's books. I love it. It's beautiful and the recipes are both simple AND exciting. She always reminds me that I don't have to eat boring, redundant meals every day just because I work and have limited cooking time at night. Many of these recipes require only a handful of ingredients and no more than an hour of preparation from start to finish. And they're elegant meals that provide nourishment and beauty. The scallop dish is lovely. The mustard fish surprising with the touch of salty capers. The wedding soup I'm planning to make tomorrow, but already I see that her recipe respects the cook's time while not sacrificing creativity and flavor. I love The Barefoot.

I also have all her other cookbooks but agree this one is the best. The title made me hesitate, thinking it might be a cookbook for beginners or a "Joy Of Cooking" type but I was very wrong. That's not to say a beginner would be intimidated by it. All levels of cooks will enjoy this one. The layout/format is very well thought out. Don't skip reading the intro on this one, she has wonderful suggestions and ideas.

I am a Barefoot Contessa devotee -- I make one of her recipes almost once a week, but I'm just not in love with this cookbook. Yes, the fish baked in mustard and cream is very nice and easy, but like almost everything else, it is loaded with fat and there's no way to make it healthier. I think her other books have a better balance of high fat and low fat dishes. There are too many belt-busters here. There's also not much new on the roast vegetable front. This is a good book and beautifully done, but I think Garten's Parties will stand up in your kitchen much longer.

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