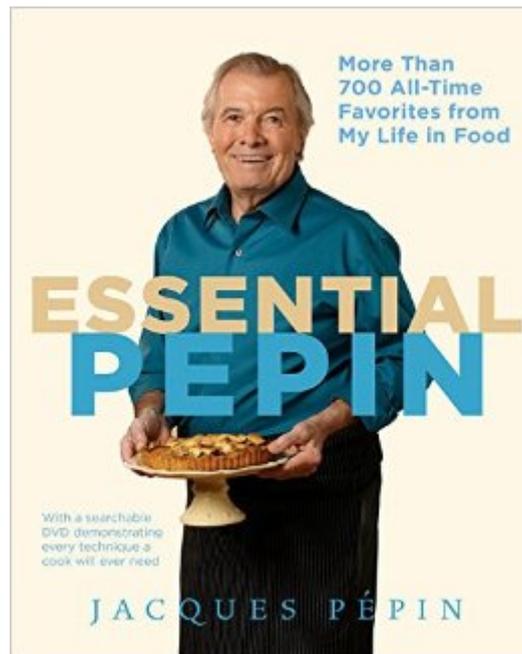


The book was found

Essential P pin: More Than 700 All-Time Favorites From My Life In Food



even using the book or viewing the DVD! It is making me very suspicious of the Vine program and now all reviews on . I received this book as a gift, I did not intend to buy it. I didn't intend to buy it because I have Pepin's Complete Techniques, Fast Food My Way, Sweet Simplicity, his memoir and I don't know what else in my collection of over 450 cookbooks. I mean, do I need another one? I didn't think so. Well, I was wrong, wrong, wrong! For starters, the book is made to be abused. A thick plastic cover that isn't destroyed when you wipe it clean. And every page is solidly stocked with recipes interspersed with sweet watercolor/drawings like cookbooks used to have. The complaints here over the lack of photos just don't apply as these dishes are so simple that any way they look when you finish them is probably exactly what they look like for everyone else. What happened to the time when people liked good food to look like it was made in an auberge and not a 5-star restaurant? What happened to the time when Julia's Mastering the Art of French Cooking was just fine with no photos? As for the DVD, it is PURE GOLD even if you never use a recipe. You want to know what it looks like to do basic things right, like truss a chicken with or without a needle, shuck an oyster or clam with minimal trouble, use up artichokes that are spoiling, make a caramel cage or angel hair nest for a dessert? Just watch the magnificent videos of a chef with rare confidence in every technique he demonstrates, as if it were as easy as folding a napkin.

Cookbooks are a hard sell these days. If you want a recipe, you can get 20 versions on Epicurious, or use google and get thousands. If you want to see a technique demonstrated, youtube probably has it. So what would impel anybody to actually pay for a cookbook? In one word - Wisdom. This tome (and it is, a tome) is a collection gleaned from Pepin's lifetime as a chef, (somewhat) updated to accommodate modern sensibilities. It has a remarkable range, from dorm food (pita pizza? really?) to roast goose with all the trimmings, to home-cured ham (cooking time - 8 months). It also has notable breadth, including not only things we Americans expect from a French cook (frogs legs, croissants, cassoulet), but also Asian soups, Indian relishes, and other dishes that have found their way into the US diet. (I was tickled to find my grandmother's schav recipe on the first page. Using chicken stock and sweet cream instead of scallion broth and sour, but still). Most of the recipes rely entirely on fresh ingredients (Tabasco sauce and such being the exceptions), but there are notes about potential substitutions (using canned stock for fresh, for example). What makes this all worth it, however, is the tidbits of knowledge larded throughout: "Moisten your hands before rolling out the meatballs," "You can double the dressing recipe - it will keep in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks," "Don't worry if some of the stuffing is visible - it will not leak out," "You can make this ahead and reheat it, but add the peas at the last minute so they won't lose their color." And so on. This,

coupled with the advice on techniques, brings the recipes out of the realm of "scarey French food" and into the realm of "totally doable.

Okay, ok. Let's first taxi these children of the Food Network "foodies" safely off the runway. Readers who want colorful photographs and step-by-step instructions: You want either "Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home" Or "Jacques Pepin Celebrates." Readers who want the dvd to contain visual instructions on how to prepare many of the dishes in the book, buy the 3 dvd set of the same name (Essential Pepin) OR go sample some full length episodes on KQED. The single dvd included with this book is a condensed, updated version of Pepin's The Complete Techniques DVD, where he shows you how to perform essential techniques (knife sharpening, trussing a chicken, making a baguette, proper way of cutting, etc). I assure you, this is nothing like the current crop of tv cooks. He gets to the point and shows you the correct way. There is no flashiness, no reality tv conflict. Readers who want to read about Pepin's long successful career, there is his autobiography: The Apprentice: My Life in the Kitchen. Readers who don't know who Jacques Pepin is, and ask why they should buy this book when they can get the free recipes from the internet? Just read some of the conflicting comments from internet recipes. Internet recipes are not written with decades of teaching and cooking experience from a master chef who personally retested each recipe before putting it in this book. The rest, either enjoy Essential Pepin, or go sign up with the French Culinary Institute in Manhattan where he is the Dean of Special Programs or go visit Jacques himself and ask him to show you how to cook.

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