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The Backyard Homestead Book Of Kitchen Know-How: Field-to-Table Cooking Skills



Synopsis

Growing vegetables and raising livestock is only the beginning of a successful homestead â” that fresh food goes to waste unless you can properly prepare, cook, and preserve it. Andrea Chesman shows you how to bridge the gap between field and table, covering everything from curing meats and making sausage to canning fruits and vegetables, milling flour, working with sourdough, baking no-knead breads, making braises and stews that can be adapted to different cuts of meat, rendering lard and tallow, pickling, making butter and cheese, making yogurt, blanching vegetables for the freezer, making jams and jellies, drying produce, and much more. Youâ™ll learn all the techniques you need to get the most from homegrown foods, along with dozens of simple and delicious recipes, most of which can be adapted to use whatever you have available.

Book Information

Series: Backyard Homestead

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Storey Publishing, LLC (August 25, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1612122043

ISBN-13: 978-1612122045

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 1.1 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ” See all reviewsÂ” (29 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #155,867 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #172 inÂ” Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Entertaining & Holidays > Seasonal #180 inÂ” Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Canning & Preserving #292 inÂ” Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking by Ingredient > Natural Foods

Customer Reviews

I would like to thank Storey Publishing for allowing me an ARC of this book in exchange for an open and honest review. This truly is a book every household interested in getting back to the basics of growing, storing, cooking and eating their own foods needs. What a magical encyclopaedia! And I have to say I owe this book an apology. When I first started reading it I thought “oh-hum nothing new here for me” as I grew up in a family who is still very active in growing, storing, making and baking as much as we can despite our lives changing and moving away from the farm life. I then realised I was being very harsh on a book. The author is very much a woman after my

own heart and this book is a brilliant reference guide to anyone of any level of food growing, prepping, cooking and eating who wants to get back to the basics as much as possible. Yes there were areas I already knew how to do hands down (and in some cases already do in a slightly different way) but I still learnt a lot of things and kept finding myself taking notes just in case I don't end up buying it. Though I can see myself buying it. In fact, I can see this being the perfect gift for my kids, especially my girls who are already plotting to turn as much of our large backyard into vegetable and fruit gardens as they can. And as they are only 10 and 8, I can see this book being a fantastic reference guide to help them (and me) as this plan of theirs develops. Even if you don't feel you have a big enough yard or have any yard or can't have chickens or similar in your area, this book would still be helpful. Simply get what you can grow yourself from a lovely local organic farmer's market and follow the storing, pickling, canning, freezing ALL of the above to preserve these foods for later. If you can't grow it - buying local and in season and preserving as per the instructions given will make you a far healthier and happier person. Well, that's what I got from this book. Yes we still do hope to grow as much as we can but I can't fit a cow in my yard. And so next time I see my butcher about half a cow there are so many more options, thanks to this book, for me to try. As weird as it might sound, I've always wanted to render my own animal fats for cooking and baking so see, even I learnt something new! And the best bit about it is the instructions in this book are simple, to the point and easy to follow. It doesn't matter your skill level, the steps are so basic - while being so informative that you just go at your own pace with them. And, in most cases, you won't need overly fancy equipment or exotic ingredients to achieve them! The only reason I found I couldn't give this book the full 5 stars is simply because I didn't agree with all of it. That doesn't mean it, or my own way of doing things, are wrong it just means we do things differently. Plus, there was the usual America vs Australia differences in seasons, the names of things and so on that made me mark it down. Oh I know! I'm being terribly picky here! Though I will say I did like how both Fahrenheit and Celsius were used in the recipes. Would I recommend this book to others? Yes I would. The author is a woman after my own heart and has done a simply terrific job storing and sharing this essential knowledge that so many people of my generation and younger have lost. I would strongly recommend this book to anyone wanting to get these old skills back as we need to hold on to them and keep using them. Would I buy this book for myself? As mentioned above, I probably would. Running joke my husband has is I have to stop reviewing books put out by Storey Publishing as I seem to end up buying most of the ones I review I enjoy them so much! In summary:

if you're wanting to remember some of the skills our grandparents possibly had and want to use them to grow, store and make your own food – buy this book. I feel we all need to get back to the basics, no matter how fiddly and time consuming they can be compared to just going to the shops – the food we make for ourselves is better. You know where it comes from, how it was grown, how it was stored and how the dish they're turned into was made. Our children need this book as they grow up and learn about food to ensure these skills aren't lost.

More than 60 years ago, the first book I bought toward my goal of living off the land, was "So You Want To Buy a Farm". After all, my early adult years were through the 60's! However, my first employment took me to cities. I lived my "real" life, the life I set as my ultimate goal, from books. Today, I am happy to report that I have raised chickens, pigs, grow and process my own veggies and fruits, cut my own wood, make some of my own cheese from neighborhood cows and bake a lot of my own bread. I'm a firm believer in dreaming, and then rolling up your sleeves and working towards it. With this introduction in mind, when a dear friend gifted me Andrea Chesman's book, "The Backyard Homestead", I wondered just how much I would enjoy it and find it useful. It WAS and IS! First of all, it's a wonderful read. She is straightforward, warm, and knowledgeable. She is a New Englander after all! It's beautifully organized, with information you need to homestead all in one place. Since I am downsizing, this is an important consideration. So I recommend this book to those who are just starting out, as well as old timers like myself. And because it is so lovely to read, I whole heartedly recommend gifting this to arm chair homesteaders that live in cities. You don't have to raise and grow your own food to learn how to process and preserve seasonal abundance. The really generous illustrations take me right into my kitchen, leaving no doubt as to what the equipment is you need, as well as her processes. She has covered it all. Plus, I had quite a few ah ha moments with things I have yet to try. One should never stop learning!

Full disclosure, the author is my neighbor and at a recent potluck party I asked her what to do with red currants. Our conversation went from gardening to groundhogs to grandmothers, then she told me her Kitchen Know-How book had come out. You do not have to be a homesteader (I certainly am not) to appreciate this wonderful book. It is a deeply informative and delightful read and the next best thing to having a friend who is an expert at her craft stand next to you in the kitchen. I bought two. One to keep and one to give away. Her advice about the currants? Make a cordial with sugar and vodka. Brilliant.

Starting up a city homestead? This is a good book to help get you started. We live on a parcel of land less than 1 acre. We have 400sq ft of garden, 1 apple tree, 1 cherry tree, 1 peach tree, asparagus garden, raspberry garden, grape garden. This books helps determine what to do with all the produce coming in from the less than one acre of land.

I live in a community on a farm in central Vermont and this book has been essential to everyone who lives here. I followed the Sourdough Bread recipe and made the best sourdough I've ever made. I also followed the jelly and jam recipes this summer and it worked out great. Others here on the farm used it to assist them in various pickling methods. We constantly refer back to it as it is full of easily digestible, interesting and important techniques on all aspects of homesteading. Highly recommended!

Some folks might think this is basics, and it is. If you are new to cooking, if you took up spatulas and do it yourself but found you need a life raft, this is your book. If you are going to tackle farmers markets or direct from the farm food, this can save you frustration and spoiled food. What to use, how to use it and food processing and cutting is covered as well as some recipes. Not laden with color photos and stories, this is a grab your knife and follow along. In full disclosure, I reviewed a copy via NetGalley. Easily fits as a gift tucked in for farm customers.

I. LOVE. THIS. BOOK! Gobs of interesting, easy to follow, really cool things to totally take charge of your kitchen, budget and I don't know why I did not get this sooner! Of you want a great intro to DIY for the home, get this book!

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