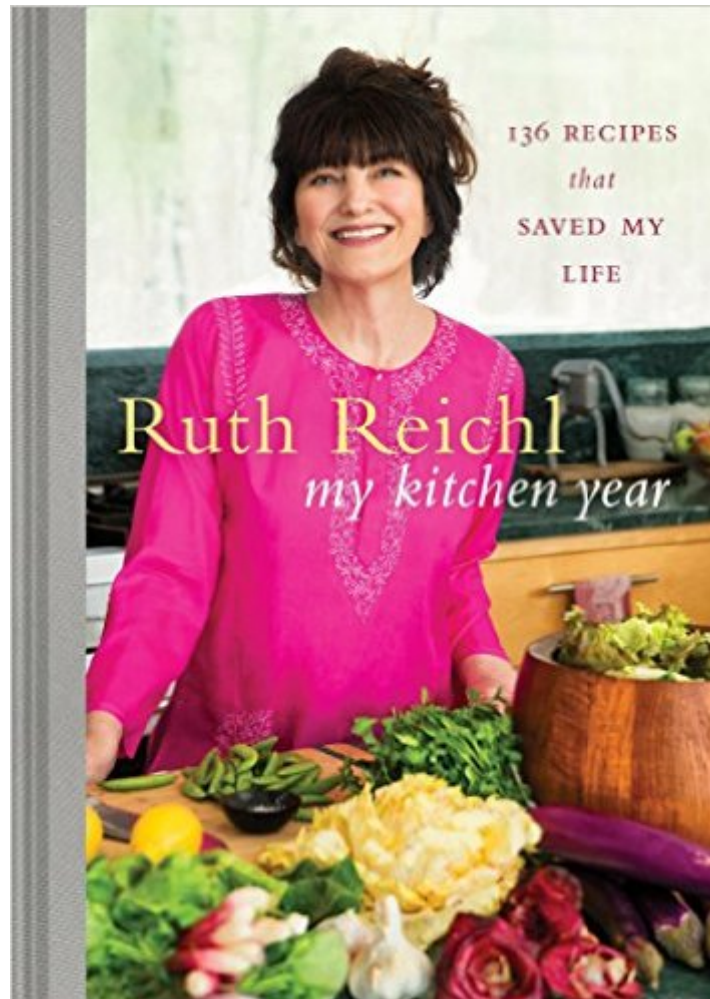


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# My Kitchen Year: 136 Recipes That Saved My Life



## Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER | NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR  
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In the fall of 2009, the food world was rocked when *Gourmet* magazine was abruptly shuttered by its parent company. No one was more stunned by this unexpected turn of events than its beloved editor in chief, Ruth Reichl, who suddenly faced an uncertain professional future. As she struggled to process what had seemed unthinkable, Reichl turned to the one place that had always provided sanctuary. "I did what I always do when I'm confused, lonely, or frightened," she writes. "I disappeared into the kitchen." *My Kitchen Year* follows the change of seasons and Reichl's emotions as she slowly heals through the simple pleasures of cooking. While working 24/7, Reichl would throw quick meals together for her family and friends. Now she has the time to rediscover what cooking meant to her. Imagine kale, leaves dark and inviting, sautéed with chiles and garlic; summer peaches baked into a simple cobbler; fresh oysters chilling in a box of snow; plump chickens and earthy mushrooms, fricasseed with cream. Over the course of this challenging year, each dish Reichl prepares becomes a kind of stepping stone to finding joy again in ordinary things. The 136 recipes collected here represent a life's passion for food: a blistering ma po tofu that shakes Reichl out of the blues; a decadent grilled cheese sandwich that accompanies a rare sighting in the woods around her home; a rhubarb sundae that signals the arrival of spring. Here, too, is Reichl's enlivening dialogue with her Twitter followers, who become her culinary supporters and lively confidants. Part cookbook, part memoir, part paean to the household gods, *My Kitchen Year* may be Ruth Reichl's most stirring book yet—one that reveals a refreshingly vulnerable side of the world's most famous food editor as she shares treasured recipes to be returned to again and again and again. Praise for *My Kitchen Year* "Ruth is one of our greatest storytellers today, which you will feel from the moment you open this book and begin to read: No one writes as warmly and engagingly about the all-important intersection of food, life, love, and loss. This book is a lyrical and deeply intimate journey told through recipes, as only Ruth can do." —Alice Waters "What will send this book to the top of bestseller lists is the lovely way Reichl describes how dishes come together, like the Greek chicken soup with lemon and egg known as avgolemono, and her talent for assembling a collection of recipes her legions of former *Gourmet* fans will want to make themselves." —The Washington Post "The recipes make for lovely reading, full of Reichl's elemental wisdom. . . . In the best way possible, *My Kitchen Year* is cozy, the reading equivalent of curling up next to a fire with a glass of red wine and perhaps the scent of bread in the oven wafting over." —Vogue "If anyone

can convince us that a dessert, plus two more fabulous dishes, can turn a crummy day around, it's the culinary writer Ruth Reichl, who knows firsthand just how powerful food can be. "O: The Oprah Magazine" The voice is pure Reichl in a way that makes the reader yearn for a house in the country with a pantry full of staples. . . . And as she finds solace through cooking, we find comfort too. "Eater (Fall 2015) Best Cookbooks)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a wonderful book that also happens to be a cookbook that I can cook from every day. As a memoir of her days after Gourmet magazine abruptly closed, it's easy to understand how she returned to the kitchen to assuage her grief during a time of uncertainty. Be that as it may, this book contains handwritten chapter headings with poignant photographs of the countryside throughout the seasons surrounding her home in New York state along with recipes that are classic and easy to follow. There are no foodie stylists around, just one photographer who takes the picture, then joins in eating the goods. This book is intimate in its charm and fresh with recipes that are classic updated with contemporary touches. I happen to cook a lot and to also cook dishes that are similar to the ones that Ruth Reichl celebrates here. . . . although she manages to insert special little touches that I hadn't thought of before. For example, combining chopped shallots and onions to finest grated cheddar cheese before making a grilled sourdough cheese sandwich. Or, her best fried chicken brined in salt, then soaked in buttermilk and ONION before frying in coconut oil and butter. Above and beyond the visual and culinary treats that this book offers, it also contains

anecdotes that are poignant to Ruth Reichl - one of a woman offering to treat her to a sandwich while she's waiting in an airport after the sudden demise of Gourmet magazine. Or the memory evoked during a fried chicken picnic at Tanglewood of a youthful trip to Israel, forced on her by her parents where she met another young woman who happened to be Carole King - who, along with James Taylor and Yo Yo Ma, provided the program for that Tanglewood fried-chicken picnic evening.

Note: this review is of the Kindle version; the binding on the hard cover is very bad, making the book almost unreadable and certainly not usable for cooking. Ruth Reichl has been writing about food and preparing food for many years; after "Gourmet" was terminated by the owners -- sadness in the heart of this codger subscriber -- she took off a year to re-connect with cooking. The result is this unusual cookbook -- recipes, sure, but recipes which she urges her readers to read and then change to suit their own preferences. After trying two recipes following her directions, I modified them both, and enjoyed the process immensely. Another oddity: this book is almost as much about Twitter as cooking. The 140 word limit forced her into a sort of stream of consciousness conversation with many people -- a riff on the following apple crisp recipe is almost pure poetry. She calls them "word pictures": "Blackbirds swooping onto orange trees. Beautiful ballet of the air. Ashmead kernels whisper from their skins. Apple crisps." [The "Ashmead kernel is a very old apple variety, with a drab appearance which belies a unique pear-drop flavour. Ashmead's Kernel is also one of very small number of English apple varieties that also thrives in North America." Introduced here in the early 1700s. "An old English russet apple, Ashmead's Kernel originated from seed planted around 1700 by a Dr Thomas Ashmead in Gloucester. Medium size, golden-brown skin with a crisp nutty snap. Fruit explodes with champagne-sherbet juice infused with a lingering scent of orange blossom. Flesh is dense, sugary and aromatic with intense flavor, characteristic of russets. The Ashmead's Kernel is a winner of taste tests and displays some resistance to scab and cedar apple rust.

If you are like me, and collect cookbooks and with each new cookbook you sit down and prepare yourself for a wonderful read, Ruth Reichl's cookbook, 'My Cookbook Year', is the perfect cookbook. A story precedes every recipe, we are welcomed into the life of Reichl's first year after losing her job at Gourmet magazine. I remember driving home from Boston one evening in 2009, listening to NPR and Ruth Reichl was discussing her favorite chicken recipe from the new Gourmet cookbook. And, then, she discussed the sudden, abrupt closure of Gourmet magazine. Like her, I was shocked and

sad. I loved Gourmet magazine, and I read it cover to cover. Then in 2013 I read her first novel, 'Delicious' , and liked it. Now, she shares the first year of her life after Gourmet, and I urge you to read it, not just for the recipes, but the stories she tells, and her philosophy of cooking and living. This is a book to relish, don't read it too quickly, and if you read it while you are hungry, you won't get very far. You will be out in the kitchen cooking and following her recipe. She starts her book by giving us her story of hearing about the closure of Gourmet magazine. And, then, onto Notes of the Recipes. A list of staples in her pantry and refrigerator. And then onto the seasons of the year. She starts with Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer, the stories of each recipe and her recovery from the loss of her job. The smell of foods that awakened the senses, her husband's injury and surgery and what foods he requested, and then her own accident and injury and how food helped in her recovery. The friends, her family, the Farmer's Markets, the butchers, the cheese shop and all the stores that feature food, are discussed. This was the journal she kept about her year that later turned into this book.

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