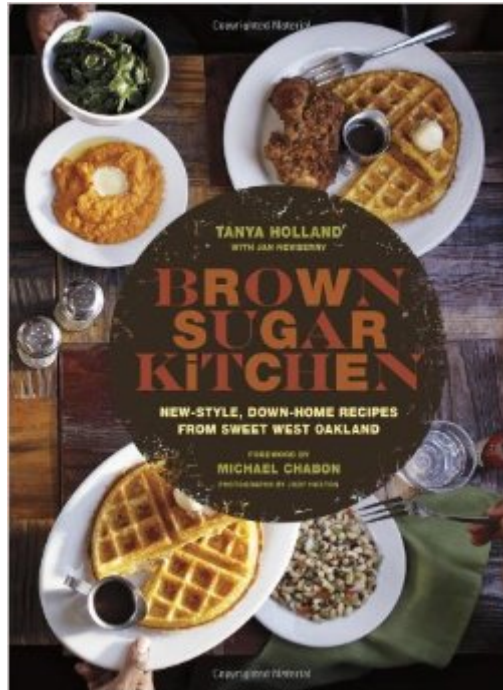


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# Brown Sugar Kitchen: New-Style, Down-Home Recipes From Sweet West Oakland



## Synopsis

Brown Sugar Kitchen is more than a restaurant. This soul-food outpost is a community gathering spot, a place to fill the belly, and the beating heart of West Oakland, a storied postindustrial neighborhood across the bay from San Francisco. The restaurant is a friendly beacon on a tree-lined parkway, nestled low and snug next to a scrap-metal yard in this Bay Area rust belt. Out front, customers congregate on long benches and sprawl in the grass, soaking up the sunshine, sipping at steaming mugs of Oakland-roasted coffee, waiting to snag one of the tables they glimpse through the swinging doors. Deals are done, friends are made; this is a community in action. In short order, they'll get their table, their pecan-studded sticky buns, their meaty hash topped with a quivering poached egg. Later in the day, the line grows, and the orders for chef-owner Tanya Holland's famous chicken and waffles or oyster po'boy fly. This is when satisfaction arrives. *Brown Sugar Kitchen*, the cookbook, stars 86 recipes for re-creating the restaurant's favorites at home, from a thick Shrimp Gumbo to celebrated Macaroni & Cheese to a show-stopping Caramel Layer Cake with Brown Butter "Caramel Frosting. And these aren't all stick-to-your-ribs recipes: Tanya's interpretations of soul food star locally grown, seasonal produce, too, in crisp, creative salads such as Romaine with Spring Vegetables & Cucumber-Buttermilk Dressing and Summer Squash Succotash. Soul-food classics get a modern spin in the case of B-Side BBQ Braised Smoked Tofu with Roasted Eggplant and a side of Roasted Green Beans with Sesame-Seed Dressing. Straight-forward, unfussy but inspired, these are recipes you'll turn to again and again. Rich visual storytelling reveals the food and the people that made and make West Oakland what it is today. *Brown Sugar Kitchen* truly captures the sense "and flavor" of this richly textured and delicious place.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is worth buying for the first 2 recipes that I've tried. We don't live far from the Brown Sugar Kitchen here in Oakland, and love their chicken & waffles. This book has made up for the disappointment we experienced one day when we stopped by to do a Saturday morning pick-up for take out (rushing to the City to take care of some family business)... the BSK does not do take out on their wonderful chicken & waffles. Sigh. The craving has been hanging in the background since. So when I saw the book, I had to buy it. I made the chicken last night. A wonderful recipe, and the first time that I actually got fried chicken right... crispy and flavorful, step #1 calls for coating the chicken with an herb blend before the buttermilk happens... succulent & juicy, fry til golden then finish in the oven until cooked through (to 165 degrees F!) If you like to cook, you'll know how much this makes sense. And the waffles. Well, let me say first, that one must have faith in the recipe's instructions. The 4-hour to overnight rest period is necessary. This is a yeast-based waffle batter that requires the proliferation of certain chemical processes in order to be right. Furthermore, if you've never made yeast-based waffles, you will think you that you got it all wrong. This batter is thin & runny, and looks nothing like the typical baking powder/baking soda thick waffle batter. If you cook these waffles right away, they'll be dense and flat in flavor. Exercise patience. Let the batter rest and you'll be rewarded with magically light, crunchy, melt in your mouth treats. You'll never go back.

The recipes are spot on and quite unique while still retaining the best elements of traditional soul food. I particularly appreciate that so many recipes include discussion of what is most essential and what can go wrong. I am culinarily-challenged compared to my chef-ie husband, so her specificity helps a lot. Why the four stars instead of five? The digital versions has lots of formatting problems which makes it hard to use on an ipad. I gave up with the digital version and bought a hard copy. I would also have preferred to have had more recipes and pictures of food and less discussion about Oakland etc., but no deductions for that because it is a matter of personal taste.

Brown Sugar Kitchen by Tanya Holland, Jody Horton, Michael Chabon and Jan Newberry. Brown Sugar Kitchen is a West Oakland gathering spot - - so disappointed that we did not hit it up when we

were in the bay area in July. So many books these days don't seem to bring something new to the table. Brown Sugar Kitchen brings some great newness to the table and more. I am the queen of macaroni and cheese - just ask my friend Pam...I haven't seen many mac and cheese recipes that make me think - I must try this version- Brown Sugar Kitchen has such a recipe! I made the macaroni and cheese for dinner Sunday night and it was absolutely amazing! Some other recipes marked to make, and soon, are cornmeal waffles with apple cider syrup, bacon cheddar and green onion biscuits, the sweet potato scones with brown sugar icing (second tear of the day, beauty again), sticky buns, Virginia ham and fried apple croque monsieur, their famous breakfast potatoes with onions and eight spices!, Andouille gorges, vidalia onion soup with cornbread croutons, caramel layer cake with brown butter and caramel frosting and the black bottom maple pecan bars look wonderful too. Brown Sugar Kitchen includes a great drinks chapter as well. The book is jam packed with goodness and comfort. You will love this book! I do. We have a small group working our way through this book on Facebook - Cooking through Brown Sugar Kitchen. I received this book as a review copy - but would buy it in a heartbeat and I probably will be for gifts this Christmas.

This book contained every one of the recipes from Brown Sugar Kitchen that I have eaten, and thus longed to translate, to my own table. Tanya hasn't held back any of her treasured gems, trusting us to perform them to snuff in our own kitchens. I've tried many of them already, and because her style of cooking is fairly different from the traditional Italian on which I was raised, I followed them to the letter the first time through. Each one mirrored delightfully the flavors and sensations I've come to love when dining at Brown Sugar Kitchen. I have to say I'm rather surprised and a bit disheartened by the buyer who asserts that Tanya's loving tribute to my hometown of Oakland is somehow misplaced. There is no shortage of recipes, rather she added extra pages and photographs to share the love and inspiration that brought these dishes to life. They are her tribute to the place of my birth and I was more than moved that she chose to reinvigorate my oft-beleaguered hometown with her style and presence. I can't recommend this book highly enough. It's got the goods, in more ways than one.

I've long anticipated this book ever since I had the cornmeal waffles. There are a lot of exciting recipes I can't wait to try. My one complaint about the book is that the story telling about the hipster neighbors who frequent the restaurant is overbearing and self-congratulatory. What is largely missing is what I crave in any cookbook: explanations. Why does the chef prepare it this way when another book uses a different method? So it's less instructive than it could be. But I'm giving this 4

stars anyway, because this gourmet soul food restaurant is an amazing accomplishment.

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