



A Girl and Her Pig: Recipes and Stories

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In *A Girl and Her Pig*, April Bloomfield takes home cooks on an intimate tour of the food that has made her a star. Thoughtful, voice-driven recipes go behind the scenes of Bloomfield's lauded restaurants - The Spotted Pig, The Breslin, and The John Dory - and into her own home kitchen, where her attention to detail and reverence for honest ingredients result in unforgettable dishes that reflect her love for the tactile pleasures of cooking and eating. Bloomfield's innovative yet refreshingly straightforward recipes, which pair her English roots with a deeply Italian influence, offer an unfailingly modern and fresh sensibility and showcase her bold flavors, sensitive handling of seasonal produce, and nose-to-tail ethos. A cookbook as delightful and lacking in pretension as Bloomfield herself, *A Girl and Her Pig* combines exquisite food with charming narratives on Bloomfield's journey from working-class England to the apex of the culinary world, along with loving portraits of the people who have guided her along the way.

A Girl and Her Pig: Recipes and Stories Details

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From Reader Review A Girl and Her Pig: Recipes and Stories for online ebook

Catherine says

Four stars for the stories, two stars for the recipes - just because so few of them appealed to me.

She uses a lot of ingredients that would be difficult for me to find locally, so it's helpful that she provides sources at the end of the book.

Jean says

Other than the porridge recipe and one for radish salad I didn't find the recipes that helpful. As expected it's very meat focused. Though I like to eat things like sweetbreads and octopus when dining out, it's not the sort of thing I cook at home. Also, some of the recipes seem like rip-offs of others - carrot, avocado, orange salad is exactly the same as the Jamie Oliver one published years earlier.

minervasowl says

I read an impressive number of reviews on one web site where just about everyone insisted on reacting (negatively) solely to the image on the cover.

I too reacted strongly to the image on the cover of this book, but my reaction was more along the lines of "That is a bold, honest statement, and evidently this woman knows how to butcher her own meat if she buys it whole like that. Cool!"

I've been reading a lot lately about how industrialized the food has become in the United States and as a result have become much more aware of what I buy and where it comes from and how it was treated before it got to me. The recipes in this book are made with hearty, rustic ingredients, prepared with basic skills (which, sadly, so many people have never learned thanks to a ubiquitous availability of processed convenience food) and attention to detail. Even being mostly vegetarian, many of the meat recipes in this book make my mouth water. I don't know that I would be brave enough to prepare them myself, but I would certainly try them in the author's restaurant.

Her enthusiasm for food and cooking and sharing meals comes through in every recipe and story. The specific foods she is passionate about are often different than those with which I am familiar, but that is what makes reading the book exciting and interesting. Dig in past the cover, and you will be richly rewarded.

Laura says

Gorgeous pics, adorable illustrations and an incredibly likeable chef. . . what more could you ask for? However, it really made me want to go to one of her restaurants - I'm not that likely to cook Fried Pig's Ear

with Salad at home (or faggots, or most of the edibles in here). Even if I had the time, I'd be eating alone! However, her instructions are clear and her voice is great. Don't miss the chapters on sweets and libations - I did get to taste-test some of those and they're very worthwhile!

Folashade says

Most of the negative reviews are based on the cover. If you have ever had the good fortune to eat at an April Bloomfield restaurant you will love the recipes in this cookbook. The Fried Pig Ear Salad, no wonder it tastes so good its slowly cooked in duck fat, cooled then deep fried.

I eat meat so seeing a dead pig so what. Its going to wind up on my plate in all its lovely glory and this cookbook has some great recipes in it. From the poppy seed dressing to the pig ear salad.

Kimberly Ann says

I'm really just not into Anchovy Anything (especially Not on Lamb...BAH) or Deep Fried Pigs Ear Salad..... but if you can get past that, some of the recipes sound absolutely delightful: carrot, avocado, & orange salad; Caesar salad; Lentil/chickpea salad w/ feta & tahini; Grilled rib eye w/ romesco; Skirt steak w/ watercress & chiles; Tongue sandwiches; Tomatoes stewed w/ white wine & saffron; Swiss chard w/ olive oil; Beef & bayley hazen pie; or Whole suckling pig.

Then there is the section: "Not so Tasty Bites" & "Not so Tasty at All" which contains... Liver & Onions....Veal kidneys in garlic butter.....

The photographs are very nice, but not available for every recipe... The recipes seem time consuming and detailed.

I don't think I'll be using the recipes in this book any time soon.

Kendra says

Though at first it thought it a bit foolish to rate the literary merits of a cookbook, I would say that "A Girl and Her Pig" is significantly better than some of the non-fiction I've recently read. Bloomfield's narration provides context to her recipes, allowing the reader to fully envision the experience of preparing one of her dishes. She clearly has a great respect for food (specifically ingredients); her recipes make preparing offal seem approachable, while elevating porridge to a high art form.

Dean says

I liked this book, but I did not love it.

There are a lot of great recipes in this book, and I would purchase it. (And Probably will.)

However, it's not as good as it should be.

I liked some of the narratives of the author, and in the end, it was nice, but some of it seemed uneven or incomplete. Some of the narratives were also uninteresting, so I wondered why they were added.

Many of the recipes are solid, but many also leave me cold.

I think that the photography could have been better frankly, and I wonder if it was meant to be more arty, but not too much involved in making me want to eat most of the food.

i would like to see another book from Ms. Bloomfield, and maybe a cooking show.

Nicole says

I've heard a lot of good things about this book (and a lot of controversy) and spotted it this morning in ebook form at 90% discount. I had to have it despite my preference and insistence for having my cookbooks be physical objects.

This book is gorgeous. The recipes fully embrace that modern rustic trend, which I'm fully in favor of. The recipes speak to me with their elevated yet down to earth simplicity. The writing is enjoyable and April's voice is warm and pleasant.

I can't comment on how any of these recipes tastes, but I spent all morning reading this while being sick in bed and, right now, I'm in love with *A Girl and Her Pig*.

Cheska says

Came across the book from one of the Amateur Gourmet's blog posts extolling her adobo and curry recipes. While I have my family's adobo recipe, I love researching other adobo recipes and trying them out. I like that she uses chunks of unpeeled ginger and smashed garlic cloves. It's rustic, nonfussy, and simple. I like the curry recipe too, but its spice list does seem daunting. This is where "mise en place" comes in! Other than these two recipes, I didn't find others useful or interesting. I tried to read the narrative, while browsing recipes, but it didn't hold my attention.

Jennifer says

I really appreciate a technical, specific cookbook. Do I simplify when I use these recipes? yes, almost always. But first, I make better substitutions (grad student budget) when I know exactly what purpose an ingredient is serving. Second, when things go wrong, good source material is invaluable for diagnosis and making correcting notes for the future. My approach to cooking is that of a lifelong student, and this is an excellent text.

Emily says

The stories were charming and the recipes (for the most part) simple and easily tweeked.

Darren says

Straight away this book has seemed to spark controversy in some quarters. The front cover features a woman with a dead pig over her shoulders, not quite how a fox fur would be worn, yet there is nothing controversial, campaigning about the picture.

It is almost a serene, respectful scene. Nothing more, nothing less. The author, a renowned chef who was born in England but escaped to the United States, clearly likes her pigs - one of her restaurants is even named after a pig. A good chef will respect their ingredients and if an animal, they will obviously care about the animals welfare before they make their journey to table. Why do anything different?

This is quite a personal work of love for the author, more than just a recipe book, yet it is not so autobiographical first and recipes second. Maybe the author's life and personality starts to come out through the eclectic mix of recipes. Not just porky goodness but the whole gamut of food... even vegetables.

Sometimes one gets the impression that books of this kind are a little too navel-gazing for the author, one of those things a chef "has" to do at a certain time, i.e. issue a book, and thus a lot of the text accompanying the recipes is filling - like sawdust in a cheap sausage. In this book, it doesn't feel like that. There is just some form of harmony. A culinary ying and yang if you will.

Certainly reading about the author's life and her philosophy to her art helps take her food into another, more personable dimension. The author just has a sort of devil-may-care, unplanned rebellious streak that is truly subconscious. Good food often takes discipline (right recipe, right ingredients, etc.) yet on the other hand things like precision are eschewed. Yet it works. Formality and pomposity is similarly given a bit of derision for good measure. Whatever you feel, there is balance here, it makes sense to the author and it will no doubt make sense to you once you get on to the same wavelength.

Even the book's signposting and organisation in some ways shouts planned rebellion yet there is no call for change or doing something, well differently. Sure there is organisation but can you see a thread? Recipes are split into sections, namely breakfast; nibbles; big bowls of soup; well-dressed greens and things; meat without feet; birds; cow; a little lamb; fine swine; the not-so-nasty bits; veg; potato and friends; sweets; dressings, sauces and condiments; a couple stocks and libations. See. No real thread. No chronological order. Yet ... well, this reviewer understands. So maybe it is the "rest of the world" who is at fault if they just don't get this. It is really, really hard to describe.

Even taking a recipe at random - in this case the first one: pancakes with bacon and chilli. Chilli for breakfast? Yet why not? In fact it can be a very nice balance. This book is full of these unfamiliar things and of course some of the more familiar to boot, but do look carefully for hidden differences.

Each recipe is surrounded by lots of chatter - there is no other word for it and this is not being disrespectful. It is like having a loud-mouthed, good-natured Brummie (a person, like the author, from the Birmingham area of England) just talking and telling you things as you go along. It doesn't feel stilted. You are learning whilst (hopefully) having fun. But if there was a test at the end you might struggle to know what you have specifically learned thanks to the structured, unstructured-ness (if there is such a word) to it all. The recipes are easy to follow, challenging but not necessarily hard. Would it be fair to say a positive experience possibly unlike others you will have.

Now, usually at this point YUM would note with disdain if the recipes fail to give an approximation of the preparation and cooking times. What's the point here? No doubt the author wouldn't keep to them - even in a professional kitchen the sense is that the timer might be buried beneath a pile of cloths - intuition rules OK.

So either the author has found a great niche for a book of this kind which is, let's face it, not overly innovative (good chef writes book, adds bit of a life story, recipes etc). Yet it is innovative. Probably not by design either but by nature. So either the author and this reviewer are similarly "mad" (which is a possibility as we were both born relatively near to each other) or there is just a little something that will be shared with you once you start looking at the book.

Let time and your thought determine it. Even if for whatever reason you don't gel with the author and her style, the recipes will still be more than good enough to make this book a great buy. And if you can gel with the overall wavelength which is really, honestly not trying to get you to buy into something. Then well, boy!

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Beverly says

Looks good, but I have yet to actually cook anything. Will wait to rate until I have. I can say my friend made a ginger cake that everyone loved (from this book).

Just shared 9 dishes from "A Girl and Her Pig" by April Bloomfield with friends. Gotta say they were all really yummy. You need to use your own good sense a little with her recipes, but they are basically really good flavor combinations.

Monica says

The book is down to earth, straightforward and simply delicious - like her food. The recipes are approachable, and easy to follow, not intimidating in the slightest.

She is generous and encouraging with her instructions, and hands on in every possible sense. The stories that she shares reveal her love for the tactile and sensory pleasures of cooking and her respect for ingredients, as well as her gratitude and affection for the people who showed her the way.

It makes me want to go directly to my butcher now.
