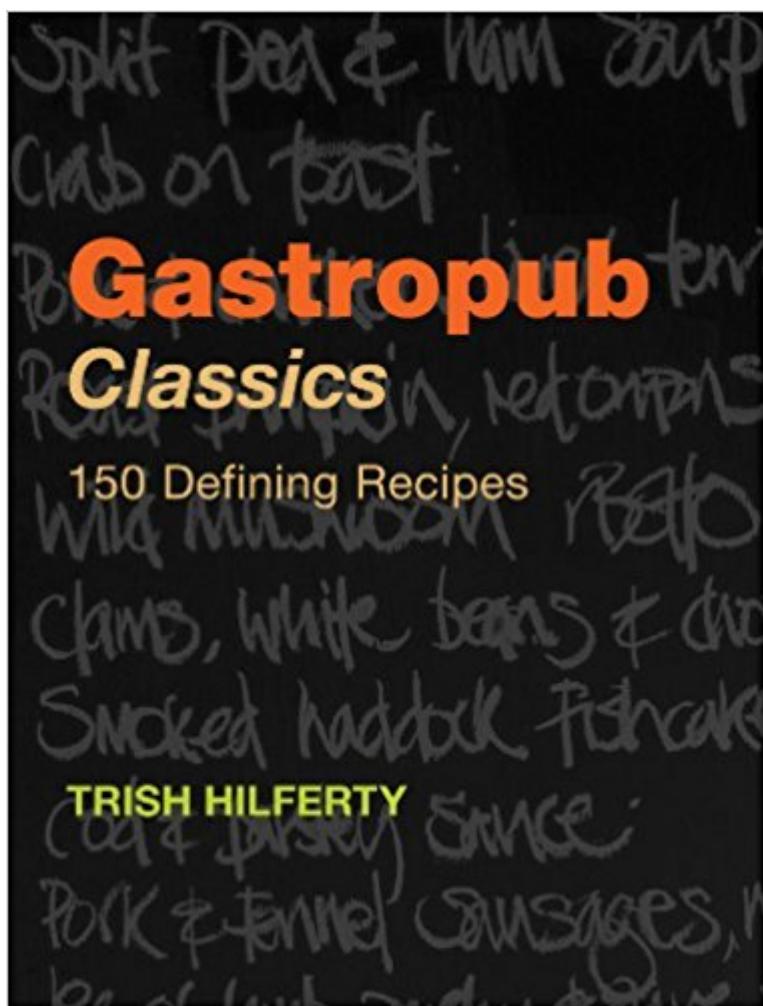


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Gastropub Classics: 150 Defining Recipes



Synopsis

The gastropub, that culinary institution that has revolutionized British cooking over the past 15 years, has at last come of age, now fully integrated into the world of good food. This publication of this book gives the gastropub movement the classic work it deserves written by one its greatest exponents. The award-winning cookbook writer and award-winning chef of the The Fox Dining Room in London has written a book that pulls together all the classic dishes that combine to make up the definitive recipe list for lovers of gastropub cooking. Recipes are taken from her own repertoire as well as drawing on classic dishes from leading fellow gastropub chefs. Written in her inimitably clear and precise no-nonsense style, with striking photography by Jason Lowe, this is a book to turn to time and time again for wonderful dishes packed full of gutsy and bold flavors—the epitome of all that is so good about the gastropub repertoire. Recipes include Sweetcorn Chowder, Serrano Ham and Pan con Tomate, Smoked Mackerel Paté, Pumpkin and Ricotta Gnocchi, Calf's Liver and Bacon, Swiss Chard and Feta Pie, and Sticky Toffee Pudding with Butterscotch Sauce.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Absolute Press (December 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1904573533

ISBN-13: 978-1904573531

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #749,614 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #175 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > English, Scottish & Welsh #1067 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Asian Cooking

Customer Reviews

Trish Hilferty is former chef at London's legendary gastropub The Eagle. As head chef of The Fox Dining Room in Shoreditch, she scooped the prestigious Tio Pepe London Gastropub of the Year award in 2005. Her first solo cookbook, Lobster & Chips, received the Gourmand World Cookbook Award for Best Single Subject Food Book.

Imagine opening a book on contemporary British pub food and seeing recipe after recipe of foods you made in San Francisco in the late 1960's - Split Pea and Ham Soup, Watercress and Potato Soup . . . It makes sense in that Gastropub Classics is basically a book of comfort food - British, Australian, French, Spanish, Italian - that can be managed in a pub or home kitchen. Yes, there are a few more offal recipes than you would find in an equivalent American book - Steak and Kidney Pie; Grilled Ox Tongue, Watercress and Runner Beans; Lamb's Sweetbreads, Peas and Tarragon . . . Yes, there is an occasional reference to an unfamiliar ingredient - Gentleman's Relish, laverbread, mushy peas. Yes, there are some cuts of meat that might be a bear to track down such as lamb's neck. Yes, you need to translate British potato cultivars and pig breeds to their closest American cousins. So yes, you are very aware this is a British cookbook. However, one of the strengths of the book is the introduction to each recipe which often tells you why specific products are chosen, where the recipe originated, how popular it is as a pub food, when to drink cider rather than ale, what not to do that would make the dish unpalatable. These introductions provide a bit of the history of the author and of gastropub food; they are a major reason for using this particular cookbook rather than another with similar recipes. The layout is pleasing, the instructions clear, the recipes appropriate to the average home cook & kitchen. Recommended as a way to return to old forgotten comfort food and be trendy at the same time.

If you need one concise book that can define what a gastropub is, through its recipes, then maybe this is for you. Despite the gastropub revolution hitting the UK many years ago, it has left an unforgettable mark on the quality of food served in many pubs and restaurants and generally "lifted the bar" and encouraged a whole new generation of chefs to try something different and push boundaries. Pretentious? Not intentionally. But it was at the time a bit of a culinary gastronomic revolution in the making, that is for sure and deserves to be marked accordingly. Of course, with this book, you are able to recreate many recipes and possibly transform your own table at the same time. Straight from the beginning you can feel that a lot of feeling has gone into the production of this book. A series of "Notes for American Readers" carefully highlight the differences in measuring systems used by the two countries and a range of conversion tables are conveniently provided. Even a glossary translating many British English to American English terms is provided - aubergine is eggplant for example. This latter feature is something that many cook books could provide - think of their broader potential international audience and the aid that a couple of extra pages may provide. An introduction to the gastropub is also provided but for many it will be more than likely that they dip straight into the food and find something within the 150 different recipes of interest. Split

into 12 distinct sections you are able to fine tune your search if you are looking for inspiration for a given food course. If you prefer to search on a given main ingredient then the index stands ready at your service. Each recipe starts with a brief introduction and suggestions for possible customisation. Care should be given to the number of persons that the dish will typically serve as this varies throughout on a recipe-by-recipe basis. Mental arithmetic, fingers or calculators at the ready as needed. The recipes themselves seem easy to follow and are well laid out and described. It would have been nice, however, if the recipes had featured an approximation of the preparation and cooking times as sometimes this can be a boost to a busy home cook to get an estimation of whether they must save a particular dish for another less time-constrained day. The range and diversity of the recipes is impressive, featuring something should be of interest to nearly every taste and budget. Many of the recipes seem familiar but, of course, even a good recipe can possibly be improved upon so you are advised to look also at the familiar and see just what they might be doing differently.

Trish Helferty was (and perhaps still is?) chef at London's legendary gastropub, The Eagle. She's the first to tell you that she doesn't like the "gastropub" name, since she believes that such restaurant-pubs are "what a pub should be" rather than a different category. However, the author also acknowledges that the term makes an easy soundbyte for pubs that give full attention to the quality of the food. Such places are meant to be casual and affordable. And, of course, all the 150 dishes here are meant to be accompanied with a pint of ale. You won't be surprised by any of the recipes here. They're all comfort food, in a British bar-food sort of way. This isn't the place for Thai-Moroccan fusion; it's a cookbook in which you can find a dependable recipe for cottage pie, or sausage and bean casserole, or a ploughman's lunch. The recipes themselves are, first and foremost, very well written. These are all designed for an attentive cook to throw together in a bar kitchen, so few of them have any fussy steps and they're all very forgiving. You could make most of them on a weeknight, and the rest (such as a pot roast) on a lazy weekend afternoon. Most dishes are very traditional, from devilled kidneys, to Scotch Eggs, to Lancashire Hot Pot, to Rhubarb and Apple Crumble. But plenty of them aren't predictable old standards. There's grilled chicken, fennel and lemon salad; papparedelle with peas and broad beans; chilled tomato and basil soup. Nothing exotic, in other words, but pretty darned good eating (and where's that pint of India Pale Ale)? Chapters are devoted to soups; on toast; starters; pasta and risotto; fish; meat grills; meat roasts; meat braises; bar meals; bar snacks; puddings; and "bits and pieces" (which include tartar sauce and harissa). This is a British cookbook, with only a few nods given to us Americans. There's

a glossary in the beginning of the book (to translate "beetroot" to "beets" and "swede" to "rutabega"), and metric/imperial conversion tables, so most cooks won't have a problem. Some of the ingredients may be a little hard to find, unless you have a good gourmet market nearby; the recipe for Welsh Rarebit (in the On Toast) section calls for caerhilly, a UK cheese that's made with real ale, instead of the more common (US) recipes which call for cheddar. Some of the fish may not be available in your area and you'll need to substitute. But these recipes are good enough to make you want to make the effort to do so. Most recipes have photos of the finished dish, though a few are of pub-stuff (such as the menu scrawled on a blackboard). I know that matters to some people, and these are nicely done. VERY nice book, highly recommended.

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