



The Kitchen Diaries: A Year in the Kitchen with Nigel Slater

By Nigel Slater

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"Right food, right place, right time. It is my belief—and the point of this book—that this is the best recipe of all. A crab sandwich by the sea on a June afternoon; a slice of roast goose with apple sauce and roast potatoes on Christmas Day; hot sausages and a chunk of roast pumpkin on a frost-sparkling night in November. These are meals whose success relies not on the expertise of the cook but on the more basic premise that this is the food of the moment—something eaten at a time when it is most appropriate, when the ingredients are at their peak of perfection, when the food, the cook and the time of year are at one with each other."

—Nigel Slater, *The Kitchen Diaries*

Nigel Slater writes about food in a way that stimulates the imagination, the heart, and the palate all at once. *The Kitchen Diaries* brings an especially personal ingredient to the mix, letting us glimpse his pantry, tour local farmers' markets with him, and savor even the simplest meals at his table.

Recording twelve months in his culinary life, Slater shares seasonal dishes and the intriguing elements behind them. As someone who celebrates each visit to the cheese shop or butcher, he enthusiastically conveys the brilliant array of choices and encourages his view of food shopping as an adventure rather than a chore. A rainy day in February calls for a hearty stew; summertime finds him feasting on a lunch as simple as baked tomatoes with grated Parmesan. If an exotic mood strikes him, slow-roasted duck with star anise and ginger is in order. In *The Kitchen Diaries*, Nigel interweaves his meditations on how food should be enjoyed and prepared with his delicious recipes. No matter the season, *The Kitchen Diaries* offers a year-round invitation to cook and dine with the world's most irresistible lover of food.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Few writers could get away with what London *Observer* columnist Slater does here: jotting down what he eats and recording recipes for the homemade items over the course of a year. Slater, though, has the writing chops to make it work—as proven in his memoir *Toast*. His style is lazily thoughtful, but also honest and unfussy: January 9 sees a "gray, endless drizzle" that makes it "the sort of day on which to light the fire, turn on the radio and bake a cake." The recipe for Double Ginger Cake that follows, however, highlights this book's sometimes problematic Britishness when it calls for both golden syrup and stem ginger in syrup, available, a footnote claims, "in some supermarkets and specialty shops." Slater's food isn't British in the stodgy sense. Indeed, he smoothly incorporates the flavors of other cultures into his cooking to make Indian-influenced Spiced Roast Potatoes with Yogurt and Mint, for example. Yet local references and recommendations, such as a tip that the best hummus may be purchased "at the Green Valley, just off the Edgware Road," will frustrate readers in the U.S. As George Bernard Shaw once said, the British and the Americans are two peoples divided by a common language. Sadly, much of this wonderful book is lost in translation, or lack thereof. (*Oct.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Cooking in harmony with the seasons' produce has inspired the talented London food writer to share his culinary diary across a 12-month cycle. Each date records the foods he produces for himself and for his friends. For those special dishes whose ingredients and preparation aren't obvious, Slater provides recipes. These range in complexity from a simple herbed chicken stew to an eggplant, tomato, and lemongrass curry. Fresh fruits and vegetables star throughout, and he relies on locally raised organic goods wherever possible. Experienced cooks will have little trouble interpreting some of the vague directions or translating native British produce to American kitchens. Photographs also help guide cooks. Slater disparages the idea that consumers demand out-of-season goods, calling it a myth generated by supermarkets. Yet even he can't resist the lure of fresh fruit in the depths of winter. His diary's January 4 entry notes that he crowns his breakfast oatmeal with blueberries. *Mark Knoblauch*

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Review

'Nigel is a bloody genius.' Jamie Oliver 'The greatest cookery writer of them all.' Guardian 'The pick of the bunch...bubbling with ideas, suggestions, hints and personal opinions that genuinely help you to make your own mind up about how and what to cook.' The Times 'He's a genius.' Matthew Fort, Guardian 'Slater remains the reigning champion, a writer incapable of uninspiring sentences.' Daily Express 'No one writes more temptingly about food.' Independent 'My kitchen god.' Red

Users Review

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David Nester:

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