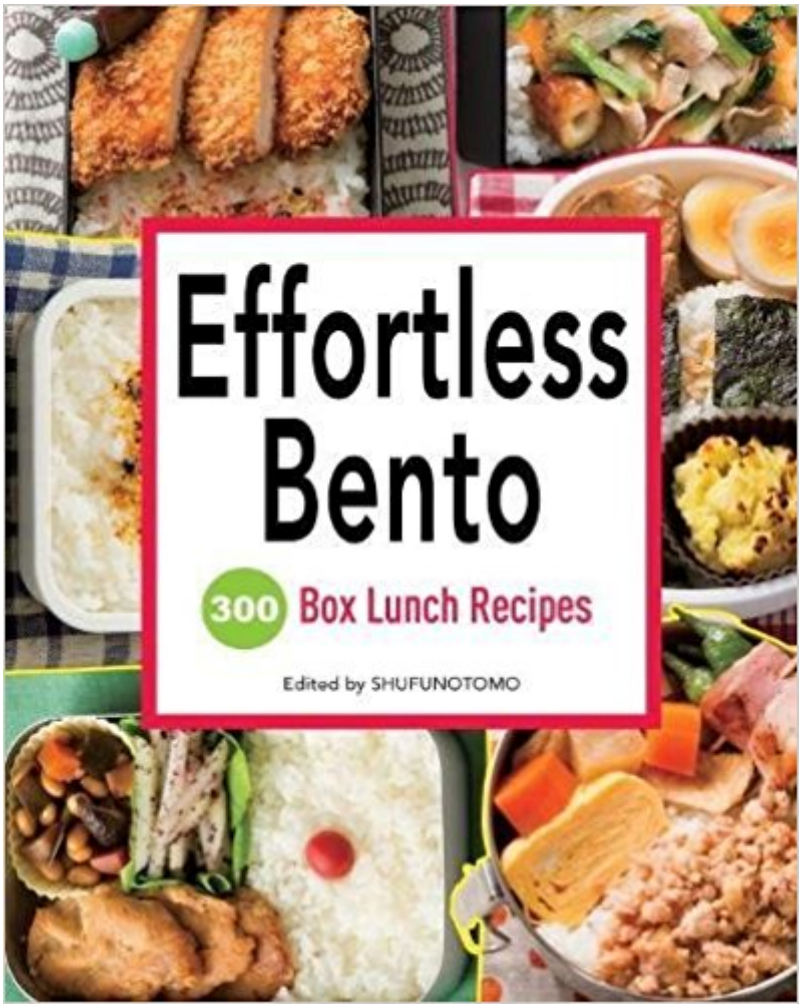
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Effortless Bento: 300 Japanese Box Lunch Recipes



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Synopsis

Bento books have been some of the more accessible and popular genres coming out of Japan over the last few years, and Effortless Bento is essentially the bento encyclopedia. Filled with hundreds of full-color photos and numerous recipes this is the essential box lunch book.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Vertical (May 27, 2014)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 7.2 x 0.5 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 133 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #40,852 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 inÃ Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Asian Cooking > Japanese #198 inÃ Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Methods > Quick & Easy #456 inÃ Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International

Customer Reviews

One of the longest running publishers for women Shufu-no-Tomo has been releasing craft and fashion magazines and mooks since 1915. With its first publication, the semenal magazine, Shufu-no-Tomo in March 1917 SnT has set the standard for design for women ages 20 to 35 in Japan for generations. SnT currently publishes around 15 magazines and dozens of books each year making them one of the more recognized sources for crafts, cooking and women's fashion in Japan today.

Lots of great recipes. (There's one for deep-fried carrots that comes out tasting like sweet potato. My dad hates cooked carrots and he was eating these like candy.) There are ways to prepare things ahead for bento, what's best made fresh and what can live in the fridge for a while, and many other great tips. Definitely a keeper for the bento library.My only quibbles (and they are small ones) is that this is not necessarily a beginner's bento cookbook. It expects some previous knowledge of how to cook in a Japanese fashion. (If you are a newbie to this sort of cooking, I highly recommend the youtube channel Cooking With Dog, hosted by a lovely grey poodle. The videos are an excellent

way to familiarize yourself with Japanese cooking and their recipes are also delicious.) It is translated from a Japanese magazine, so it will not hold American hands through the very basics. On the other hand, this is a good thing because it doesn't rehash the simplest of recipes over and over and over again. (Rolled Egg Sheets, I'm looking at you.)

The book is so easy to use thanks to well-organized recipes that are arranged by suggestions of what and how to pack to compliment colors and flavors. The book has many great suggestions and tips for cooking and packing each recipe. As an American, there are only two things about the book that give me pause, but in Japan they are perfectly normal so I didn't want to take any stars away. First, there is little to no fear of salmonella and many other food-borne bacteria, plus as is evident from the food safety and cleanliness processes that the author recommends over and over in the book, they are big on that so it further cuts down the fear of food poison and other problems with eating an unrefrigerated bento. They typically do not microwave bento items either, making cup noodles or soups with "soup bombs" where they pack the ingredients and use an electric hot water dispenser. Because of this, many bento boxes are not microwave safe. So if food safety and bacteria is a concern in your area of the world, you might want to use ice packs and just take them out an hour or so before you want to eat your lunch. If you need to microwave something, be sure your bento box is approved for it. Also, I try to pack a little less starch (in a typical Japanese-origin bento cookbook, you are recommended that half your container is rice, which is a bit much for me) and fill that space with vegetables, but the proportions are fairly good sizes otherwise. Those things are really preferences, though, and don't take away from how amazing this book is. It truly creates delicious, easy recipes that are a nice break from my typical western-style lunches.Update: I made the karaage (fried chicken) recipe tonight. I had skipped over it because I have a version I learned years ago that I like, so I went on to try other recipes for things I'd never eaten before. I am sorry I skipped it now, because this version trumps my old one by a mile. It was delicious and so easy. I was a little nervous about the broad bean paste because it smelled like fermented funk stank in a jar. When you cook the chicken, all the funky smell goes away and it just makes the chicken taste extra savory in a great way. I wish I had added a little more. A little goes a long way though. The potato starch made the chicken crisp up really fast, so the pieces cooked in just about two minutes or so for bite-sized chunks.***Don't be thrown by the recipes calling for cake flour. Other Japanese recipe books I've bought do the same. It means AP flour (wheat flour with no salt or leavening), as opposed to rice flour. It doesn't mean the stuff called cake flour in the US, but you could use that too in a pinch.***

Wow, this book is more than exactly what I wanted. It's truly fabulous. I was hoping for some easy to make foods for my husband's bento but also easy to make foods for my kids at home. Usually with cooking books you find maybe 5 or 6 recipes you really like. With this book I immediately dog-eared at least 1/3 of the recipes. Already I've tested the Miso-Glazed Pork, Chicken Teriyaki, Chicken Gratin, Mini Burgers and the Sweet and Sour Pork Balls and all were good!On top of the recipes this book is great for ANYONE trying to save time and money by freezing foods. It tells the best way to freeze various meats and vegetables and foods and the best ways to make single serving pre-prepared foods and even the best way to defrost and pack them for lunches. So if you see a particular type of useful meat on sale, you can either cook it up as a recipe and freeze it or you can freeze it raw and cook it later! I can tell I'll be coming back to this book over and over.

By far the best bento book I own. Lots of great, quick recipes that don't taste like you are cutting corners. The section on prepare ahead and freezing portions for the future is invaluable as far as meal planning and time saving goes. A book really has to stand out for me to review it, this one does.

Exhaustive & encyclopedic, this book contains just about everything you need to know about preparing bento lunches. Tips on freezing, thawing, best foods to freeze or refrigerate, how to pack a bento and how to keep it safe. Confusing layout at first but after a second read I see the sense in how it's arranged. Frozen foods first, organized by type of meat (pork, chicken, beef) then refrigerated foods similarly arranged, then sides arranged by color (a bento should include foods that are red, green yellow, etc). Lots of standard recipes, old favorites and some I have never seen before. There is probably something for everyone in this book.You will not find cute little animal faces or whimsical cut out sandwiches. You will find basic bentos, lots of variety, step by step instructions and color photos on every page.

Really informative, many good recipes, lots of good ideas for how to make lunches ahead and get them ready quickly in the morning. I personally really like that calories are listed as well. Some of the recipes are just not suited to a western palate and grocery store (i cannot get baby sardines at Shop Rite), but they are few and far between. This is a really good book to get an idea of how to construct an authentic Japanese bento, and you can modify it as you wish to suit your own taste.

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