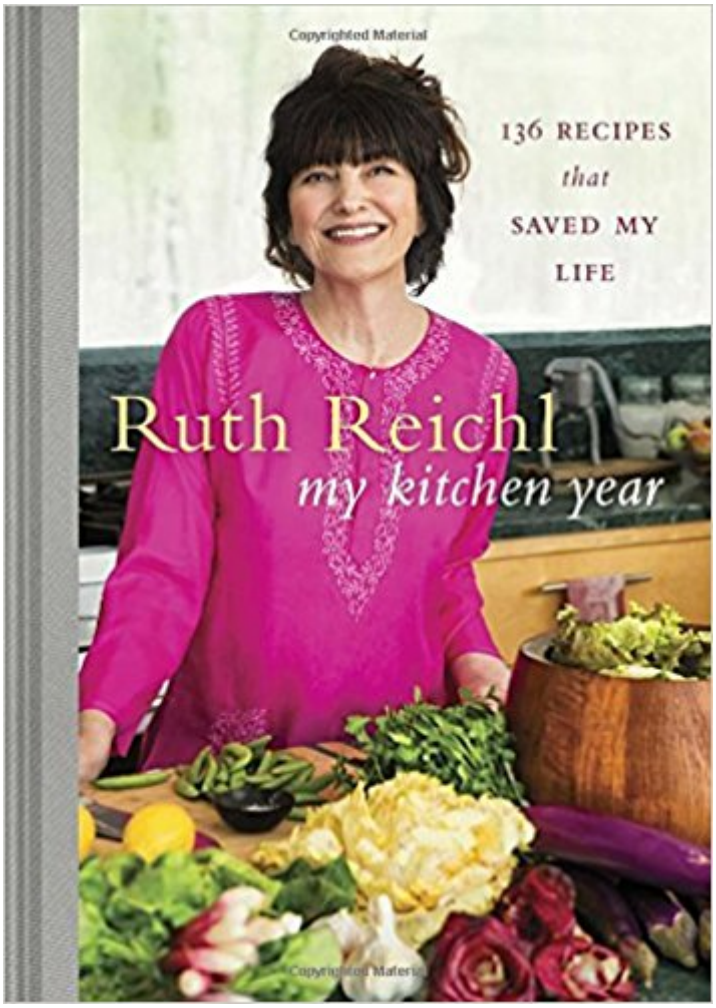
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My Kitchen Year: 136 Recipes That Saved My Life



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Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER |Ã Â NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BYÃ Â Los Angeles Times Ã¢â ¬Â¢ NPR Ã¢â ¬Â¢Ã Â MenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Journal Ã¢â ¬Â¢ BookPage Ã¢â ¬Â¢Ã Â Booklist Ã¢â ¬Â¢Ã Â Publishers WeeklyIn the fall of 2009, the food world was rocked when Gourmet magazine was abruptly shuttered by its parent company. No one was more stunned by this unexpected turn of events than its beloved editor in chief, Ruth Reichl, who suddenly faced an uncertain professional future. As she struggled to process what had seemed unthinkable, Reichl turned to the one place that had always provided sanctuary. Ã¢â ¬Å“I did what I always do when IÃ¢â ¬â„¢m confused, lonely, or frightened,Ã¢â ¬Â• she writes. Ã¢â ¬Å“I disappeared into the kitchen.Ã¢â ¬Â• My Kitchen Year follows the change of seasonsÃ¢â ¬â •and ReichlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s emotionsÃ¢â ¬â •as she slowly heals through the simple pleasures of cooking. While working 24/7, Reichl would Ã¢â ¬Å“throw quick meals togetherÃ¢â ¬Â• for her family and friends. Now she has the time to rediscover what cooking meant to her. Imagine kale, leaves dark and inviting, sautÃƒÂ©ed with chiles and garlic; summer peaches baked into a simple cobbler; fresh oysters chilling in a box of snow; plump chickens and earthy mushrooms, fricasseed with cream. Over the course of this challenging year, each dish Reichl prepares becomes a kind of stepping stone to finding joy again in ordinary things. The 136 recipes collected here represent a lifeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s passion for food: a blistering ma po tofu that shakes Reichl out of the blues; a decadent grilled cheese sandwich that accompanies a rare sighting in the woods around her home; a rhubarb sundae that signals the arrival of spring. Here, too, is ReichlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s enlivening dialogue with her Twitter followers, who become her culinary supporters and lively confidants. Part cookbook, part memoir, part paean to the household gods, My Kitchen Year may be Ruth ReichlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s most stirring book yetÃ¢â ¬â •one that reveals a refreshingly vulnerable side of the world's most famous food editor as she shares treasured recipes to be returned to again and again and again.Praise for My Kitchen Year Ã¢â ¬Å“Ruth is one of our greatest storytellers today, which you will feel from the moment you open this book and begin to read: No one writes as warmly and engagingly about the all-important intersection of food, life, love, and loss. This book is a lyrical and deeply intimate journey told through recipes, as only Ruth can do.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Alice WatersÃ¢â ¬Å“What will send this book to the top of bestseller lists is the lovely way Reichl describes how dishes come together, like the Greek chicken soup with lemon and egg known as avgolemono, and her talent for assembling a collection of recipes her legions of former Gourmet fans will want to make themselves.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •The Washington Post Ã¢â ¬Å“The recipes make for lovely reading, full of ReichlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s elemental wisdom. . . . In the best way possible, My

Kitchen Year is cozy, the reading equivalent of curling up next to a fire with a glass of red wine and perhaps the scent of bread in the oven wafting over.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Vogue Ã¢â ¬Å“If anyone can convince us that a dessert, plus two more fabulous dishes, can turn a crummy day around, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s culinary writer Ruth Reichl, who knows firsthand just how powerful food can be.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •O: The Oprah Magazine Ã¢â ¬Å“The voice is pure Reichl in a way that makes the reader yearn for a house in the country with a pantry full of staples. . . . And as she finds solace through cooking, we find comfort too.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Eater (Fall 2015Ã¢â ¬â„¢s Best Cookbooks)

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Customer Reviews

An Best Book of October 2015: When Gourmet magazine shut its doors in 2009, longtime editor in chief Ruth Reichl was as blindsided by the news as the rest of us. In times of upheaval and uncertainty we are reflexively drawn to what comforts us and for Reichl that means cooking. My Kitchen Year is four seasons of intimate anecdotes and recipes chronicling the first year of ReichlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s post-Gourmet life. It is a cookbook with diary-style entries reflecting on the day and what led to the next recipe. The photography, like the rest of the book, is beautifully produced and never fussyÃ¢â ¬â •the perfect pairing for dishes inspired by tears, laughter, love, and a need to feel grounded when life has gone careening off the rails. My Kitchen Year is astonishingly personal and Ruth ReichlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s willingness to share not only her cherished recipes but also her thoughts and feelings during a year of transition make My Kitchen Year a very special volume. -- Seira Wilson

Ã¢â ¬Å“Ruth is one of our greatest storytellers today, which you will feel from the moment you open this book and begin to read: No one writes as warmly and engagingly about the all-important intersection of food, life, love, and loss. This book is a lyrical and deeply intimate journey told through recipes, as only Ruth can do.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Alice WatersÃ¢â ¬Å“What will send this book to the top of bestseller lists is the lovely way Reichl describes how dishes come together, like the Greek chicken soup with lemon and egg known as avgolemono, and her talent for assembling a collection of recipes her legions of former Gourmet fans will want to make themselves.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •The Washington Post Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The recipes make for lovely reading, full of ReichlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s elemental wisdom. . . . In the best way possible, My Kitchen Year is cozy, the reading equivalent of curling up next to a fire with a glass of red wine and perhaps the scent of bread in the oven wafting over.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Vogue Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“If anyone can convince us that a dessert, plus two more fabulous dishes, can turn a crummy day around, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s culinary writer Ruth Reichl, who knows firsthand just how powerful food can be.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •O: The Oprah Magazine Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The voice is pure Reichl in a way that makes the reader yearn for a house in the country with a pantry full of staples. . . . And as she finds solace through cooking, we find comfort too.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Eater (Fall 2015Ã¢â ¬â„¢s Best Cookbooks) Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The dishes are clearly fun and uplifting for Reichl, and the unexpected shift from culinary guru to happy home cook chases her blues away. Reichl reminds readers that getting lost in a recipe can be excellent therapy.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Publishers Weekly (starred review)

This is a wonderful book that also happens to be a cookbook that I can cook from every day. As a memoir of her days after Gourmet magazine abruptly closed, it’s easy to understand how she returned to the kitchen to assuage her grief during a time of uncertainty. Be that as it may, this book contains handwritten chapter headings with poignant photographs of the countryside throughout the seasons surrounding her home in New York state along with recipes that are classic and easy to follow. There are no foodie stylists around, just one photographer who takes the picture, then joins in eating the goods. This book is intimate in its charm and fresh with recipes that are classic updated with contemporary touches.I happen to cook a lot and to also cook dishes that are similar to the ones that Ruth Reichl celebrates here. . . although she manages to insert special little touches that I hadn’t thought of before. For example, combining chopped shallots and onions to finest grated cheddar cheese before making a grilled sourdough cheese sandwich. Or, her best

fried chicken brined in salt, then soaked in buttermilk and ONION before frying in coconut oil and butter.Above and beyond the visual and culinary treats that this book offers, it also contains anecdotes that are poignant to Ruth Reichl - one of a woman offering to treat her to a sandwich while she's waiting in an airport after the sudden demise of Gourmet magazine. Or the memory evoked during a fried chicken picnic at Tanglewood of a youthful trip to Israel, forced on her by her parents where she met another young woman who happened to be Carole King - who, along with James Taylor and Yo Yo Ma, provided the program for that Tanglewood fried-chicken picnic evening.This all makes me feel that Ruth Reichl has lived a blessed life despite the very public humiliation of the closing of her Gourmet magazine after ten years as its editor. She's married to Michael who is 75 who happily eats her blinis with sour cream and salmon roe in her videos, she also has a son whom she adores. Best of all, she's moved from New York City to a low slung contemporary house in New York State that was built overlooking beautiful countryside with nearby farms and other provisioners of vegetables, cheeses and other organic goodies. It almost seems like the whole demise-cum-survival scenario was "meant to be" as the next chapters of her and her family's life. She just didn't know it at the time.I've always liked Ruth Reichl through years of reading cookery magazines and cookbooks. The graphics of those Gourmet magazines under her stewardship were unbelievably rich and beautiful if you might recall. I've saved all my copies of Gourmet from those times because they were such a feast for the eyes as well as for the kitchen. And with these few rainy days, I'm looking forward to pulling them out and looking at them once again.In this book, I am particularly looking forward to trying her New York cheesecake recipe with the chocolate wafer crust and sour cream glaze, and other homey recipes like shirred eggs with pureed potatoes for supper with a simple green salad.Finally, she makes a big deal out of making turkey stock for gravy at Thanksgiving - and she's absolutely right that no matter how the roasted bird turns out, the stuffing and the mashed potatoes, with a deeply rich "made from scratch" turkey gravy, everybody will love whatever is on their plate. Not that Ruth Reichl's "other" offerings would be anything other than tasty and tender.I've reached a time when I shouldn't be buying any more cookbooks. My cookery library started with Elizabeth David's Penguin editions and expanded through the years with books by M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, Alice Waters, the River Cafe, Nigel Slater, the Conrans, Thomas Keller, Noma and Judy Rodgers. (We celebrated Christmas Eve with Judy Rodgers' roast chicken with bread salad two years ago when she died at the age of 57. It was out of this world and truly delicious!)Still, I think that this new volume by Ruth Reichl will now be my favorite and will be a standby to look through for new things to try and to tweak classic recipes I've already made many times. It is a beautiful volume on so many levels.In an interview published by

the New York Times last week, Ruth Reichl was quoted as saying "You should have as much fun as you can because you don't know what's coming down the road." Well, it looks like she not only survived what she didn't see coming down the road, but with this memoir/cookbook, she's also managed to illustrate how she's landed on her feet, built a new home and produced what I think will become a true classic in the ever mushrooming world of cooking.Good for her! - and good for us too!

I love Ruth Reichl's writing. I waited with anticipation for each month's copy of Gourmet magazine to be delivered and devoured her Letter from the Editor before even looking at the table of contents. Reading "Tender at the Bone", "Comfort Me with Apples", and "Garlic and Sapphires" were each absolutely wonderful and I hated to see each book end. Her recent novel "Delicious!" was also a great read and I was happy to load "My Kitchen Year" onto my iPad to enjoy another journey with one of my favorite authors. Big mistake! Although I really enjoyed the writing, as I have enjoyed each of the above mentioned books and the now defunct magazine, as well as drooling over many of the recipes; the book in its digital form has one glaring omission, at least in the Kindle format. It lacks links to the recipes in its table of contents and has no digital index. As a digital cookbook it is nearly worthless, unless one wants to "page" through the book to find a recipe. I find this surprising, as I have read other books containing recipes such as Stir by Jessica Fechtor which do contain digital indexes. I am now faced with the decision whether to buy it again in a hard version so I may actually use it as a cookbook.

Note: this review is of the Kindle version; the binding on the hard cover is very bad, making the book almost unreadable and certainly not usable for cooking.Ruth Reichl has been writing about food and preparing food for many years; after "Gourmet" was terminated by the owners -- sadness in the heart of this codger subscriber -- she took off a year to re-connect with cooking. The result is this unusual cookbook -- recipes, sure, but recipes which she urges her readers to read and then change to suit their own preferences. After trying two recipes following her directions, I modified them both, and enjoyed the process immensely.Another oddity: this book is almost as much about Twitter as cooking. The 140 word limit forced her into a sort of stream of consciousness conversation with many people -- a riff on the following apple crisp recipe is almost pure poetry. She calls them "word pictures":"Blackbirds swooping onto orange trees. Beautiful ballet of the air. Ashmead kernels whisper from their skins. Apple crisps."[The "Ashmead kernel is a very old apple variety, with a drab appearance which belies a unique peardrop flavour. Ashmead's Kernel is also

one of very small number of English apple varieties that also thrives in North America." Introduced here in the early 1700s. "An old English russet apple, Ashmead’s Kernel originated from seed planted around 1700 by a Dr Thomas Ashmead in Gloucester. Medium size, golden-brown skin with a crisp nutty snap. Fruit explodes with champagne-sherbet juice infused with a lingering scent of orange blossom. Flesh is dense, sugary and aromatic with intense flavor, characteristic of russets. The AshmeadÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Kernel is a winner of taste tests and displays some resistance to scab and cedar apple rust."] (Incidentally, she is addicted to apples from local farms -- you can buy many of the heritage apples atf armers markets like the one on Union Square in NYC; they may not travel well but will infuse your kitchen with wonderful aromas, far from the sterile, all the same scent -- if you can call it that -- of the dominant Delicious or Galas; the bruises from the heritage’s short travel to the City will add to the grand symphony of smells in your kitchen.)Reichl has always pushed the fun of cooking over the fun of eating out, even in the days when she was the supreme restaurant critic in New York City. This year tested her belief and commitment and she is even more committed to the idea now.Several of her strongest beliefs shine here:-- American food has greatly improved and the local farms movement has brought it to and past the levels in Europe; a "farmer’s market" in Paris, for example, may have foods on offer from several other countries and very few from local farmers near Paris.-- Bloggers have democratized food writing, have taken the place of more traditional food critics. Those critics that remain are writing on a very high level, higher than that in the past.-- Kitchens that take up all of the entertaining room in your home makes the art of cooking a communal joy; in her house, you cannot visit without being in the kitchen.-- Breakfast is by far the most important meal of the day -- setting the family off with a great start shows love and care and strengthens the bonds that tie a family together.On iPhone, I found this a wonderful companion at the farmer’s market in Ridgewood, and sipping coffee at a local Starbucks.A triumph.Addendum: I’ve just received a marvelous email from Reichl describing here collection of old menus; her website is a treasure trove:ruthreichl.com/2015/11/forgotten-restaurants.html/Extract: ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s late at night, and IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve just uncovered a box of old menus I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t even know I had. I thought IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d thrown them all away in the move from Los Angeles to New York in 1993, but I seem to have sent one big box, neatly sorted into alphabetized folders. All IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve got is the end of the alphabet; how I regret having jettisoned the rest! What did I send instead? Rickety furniture? Old clothes? How could I not have known that one day IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d treasure these old menus?The one above had a note tucked inside, from an L.A. Times reader, who sent it as a gift. ThereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s so much to parse here, including

that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Russian Caviar, Ambassador ImportationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• for $2.25, the Denver sandwich (an omelet of ham, onions and green peppers between two slices of bread), and the once ubiquitous Biscuit Tortoni.Trolling through the Rs I come to Rex Il Ristorante ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ certainly the most elegant restaurant of the eighties ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ and sigh over carne crudo with black truffles ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ $8.50. The food was extraordinarily innovative for its time, and the decor lovingly evoked another, earlier time. In its first incarnation Rex had been a fancy Los Angeles gentlemanÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s boutique, with an elevator designed by Lalique. (The learning-to-eat scene in Pretty Woman was filmed at the restaurant.)If you love food and food writing, check out this treasure house. :)Robert C. RossSeptember 2015revised November 2015Apple CrispÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢5 heirloom applesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢1 lemonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢3/4 stick butterÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢flourÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢brown sugarÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢salt1. Peel a few different kinds of apples, enjoying the way they shrug reluctantly out of their skins. Core, slice and layer the apples into a buttered pie plate or baking dish and toss them with the juice of one lemon.2. Mix 2/3 cups of flour with 2/3 cups of brown sugar, and add a dash of salt and a grating of fresh cinnamon. Using two knives - or just your fingers, cut in most of a stick of sweet butter and pat it over the top. The cooking time is forgiving; you can put your crisp into a 375 oven and pretty much forget it for 45 minutes to an hour. The juices should be bubbling a bit at the edges, the top should be crisp, golden and fragrant. Served warm, with a pitcher of cream, it makes you grateful for fall. ***Butternut Squash SoupÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢1 stalk celeryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢2 carrotsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢1 pound butternut squashÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢1/2 pound potatoesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢1 onionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢olive oilÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¢salt1. Begin by coarsely chopping an onion, a stalk of celery and 2 carrots; you donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t have to be fussy about this since youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re going to end up pureeing everything. Slick the bottom of a casserole or Dutch oven with olive oil, add the vegetables and let them tumble into tenderness, which should take about ten minutes.2. Peel a pound of butternut squash and cut it into 3/4 inch or so cubes. Peel half pound of waxy potatoes (Yukon Golds are good), and cut into chunks of the same size. Stir them into the vegetables in the casserole, add a couple teaspoons of sea salt and 2 1/2 cups of boiling water, cover and simmer until everything is very soft. This will take about half an hour.3. Very carefully puree the soup in a blender, in small batches, making sure the top of the blender is secure (hot soup can be painful).4. Taste for seasoning and serve drizzled with a few drops of olive oil and/or good balsamic vinegar. A crisp dice of apples on top makes this look lovely and adds a very pleasing note of sweetness. (Diced pickled walnuts also make a wonderful topping.)***

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