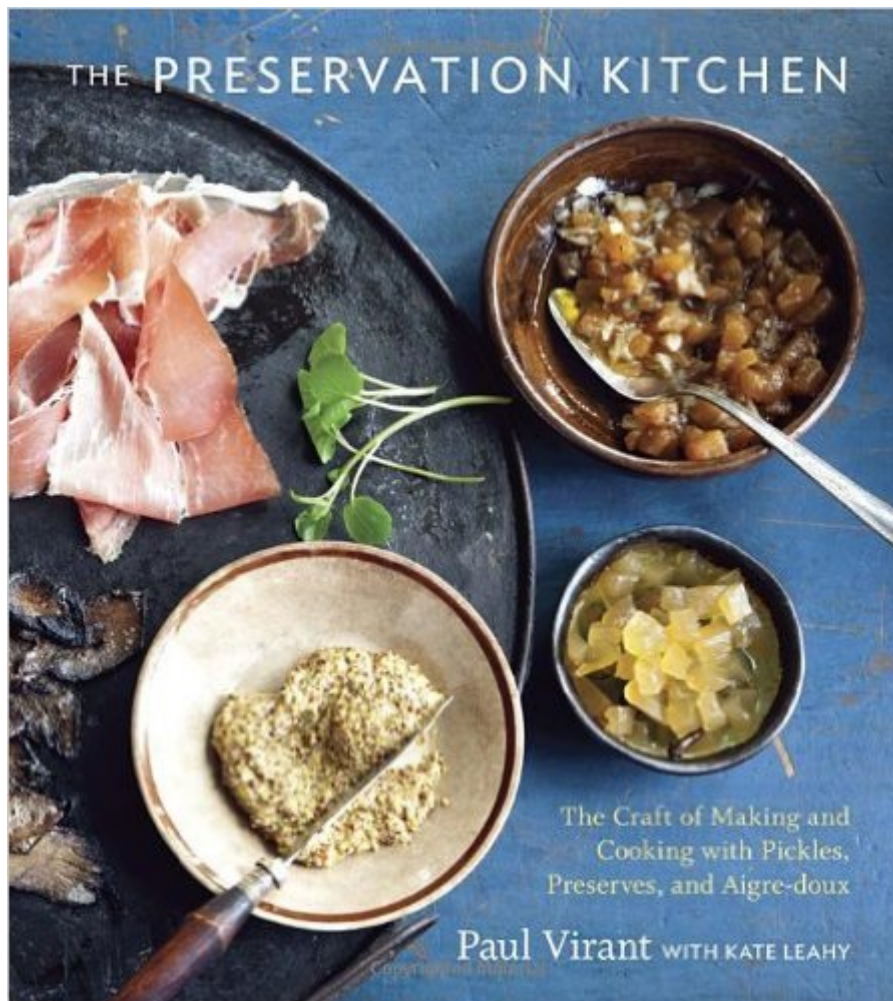


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The Preservation Kitchen: The Craft Of Making And Cooking With Pickles, Preserves, And Aigre-doux



Synopsis

The first canning manual and cookbook authored by a Michelin-starred chef and restaurant owner, The Preservation Kitchen reveals a world of endless flavor combinations using revolutionary ideas that bring homemade preserves deliciously to life. Pairing science with art, Paul Virant presents expert preserving techniques, sophisticated recipes, and seasonal menus inspired by the award-winning fare at his restaurant, Vie, in Western Springs, Illinois. Imaginative tangy jams, brandied fruits, zesty relishes, cured meats, and sweet and savory conserves are the focus of the first half of this book, while seasonal menus pairing these preserves with everything from salads and cocktails to poached fish and braised meat compose the second. Brandied Cherries used in Cherry Clafoutis, or as a garnish for the Beer-Jam Manhattan, are a sweet reminder of the summer harvest. And the Chicken Fried Steak with Smoked Spring Onion Relish anticipates warmer days when youâ™re still deep in winter. Alongside recipes and menus, Virant draws on his extensive technical knowledge and experience to provide detailed and comprehensive guidelines for safe canning practices, testing pH, pressure canning, water bath processing, and storing. But no matter how precise the science, Virant never forgets the art in each handcrafted preserve and thoughtfully developed recipe. His unique approach re-imagines seasonal eating by harmonizing opposite or unusual partnerships: the brightness of summer fruit may be tempered with the earthiness of meats and winter produce, or the delicacy of spring vegetables might be enriched by the robust herbs and spices more typical of fall. The Preservation Kitchen not only demonstrates and instructs, it encourages and explores the limitless possibilities of capturing the seasons in a jar.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Anyone considering this book should be aware that it takes a pre-modern, even anti-modernist approach to food preservation. For example, when it comes to getting jams, jellies, mostarda, etc to set up, he relies exclusively on a pectin stock that he urges you to make yourself from green apples. Since commercial pectin has been available for more than a century now, is made in the same way (by cooking pectin-rich fruits and vegetables), is tested for strength and thus produces reliable results, it's more than a little bizarre and atavistic that he won't even consider it in his recipes. If you want to substitute it, you're on your own. Granted, anyone interested in food preservation takes a certain pleasure and pride in making things themselves, but before I buy 5 pounds of apples and spend an hour in front of a hot stove cooking them down, I want to know that it's going to be better than what's commercially available. Just because you make it yourself doesn't necessarily make it better or more virtuous. And I found his apple pectin recipe wildly unreliable. After following it, I had to reduce it by two thirds before even this "pectin" stock would set up. Even then, it took almost three times as much as his mostarda recipe called for before it achieved a soft set. So, all in all, the pectin seemed to be off by a factor of about 9. Such inaccuracy is aggravating enough, but it also seriously affects every recipe you use it in. Since he calls for more than 5 cups of sugar in his pectin recipe, if you need to reduce it by two thirds and then use three times as much, you are adding 9 times more sugar and thus throwing off the balance of every recipe you use it in. All that added sugar transformed his mostarda into more of an insipid jelly.

Great book, lot's of interesting ideas and the kind of quality I have come to expect from 10-Speed Press. I have not yet made anything from the books plethora of recipes and formulae, but there are several I have marked.

1. Format: The pictures are nicely done as is the art. The tables are a bit misplaced and awkward with respect to the content, and they don't seem to flow with the layout as well as they could. The graphics could use some captions. There were times when I saw a picture and was wondering what it was, the recipe before the graphic or the recipe after the graphic. A little guesswork and I was able to identify each one, but readers hate guessing. Even though the layout was a bit weird, I REALLY loved the font and font spacing. VERY readable, and this is something sorely lacking in many books, so high praise for the fonts.
2. Content: The content is new and refreshing and treats the concept of 'preserves' with respect. These are not your grandmas pickles so if you are hoping for a more traditional approach to 'pickling' and 'preserves' you will be disappointed. This is a new spin with tons of interesting flavor combinations pulling together many new ideas.
3. Reference: The table of contents were well done, no complaints, index seemed to be

kinda jammed in there. The acknowledgements seemed a bit rushed and non-inspiring. The lack of a bibliography and a resources sections were the most disappointing parts of the book by far. So, for resources I understand the author is emphasizing local, local, local, and I'm cool with that, but not having to find my own resources for pink salt (curing salt) would be nice as would a compendium of other resources I could turn to.

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