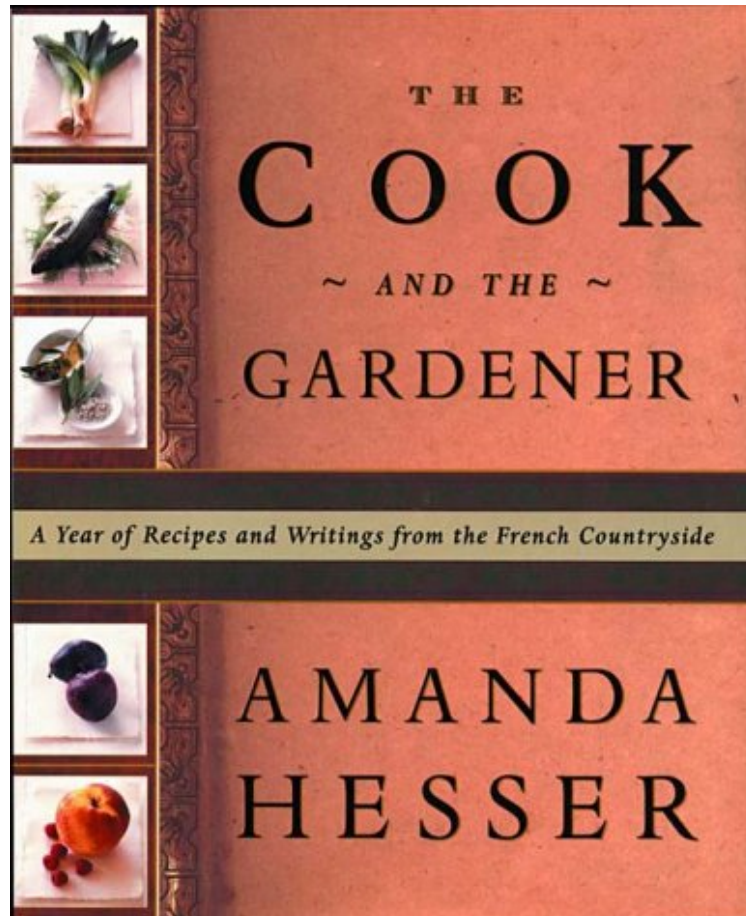


The Cook and the Gardener : A Year of Recipes and Writings for the French Countryside

Amanda Hesser

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Amanda Hesser : The Cook and the Gardener : A Year of Recipes and Writings for the French Countryside before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cook and the Gardener : A Year of Recipes and Writings for the French Countryside:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Nice tidbits, but also some ramblingBy lilmommyThere were parts of this book that I really liked, but some that I did not like. The writing is sometimes forced and uptight, sometimes it drags on and is boring. It comes across like the auther is trying to sound eloquent instead of being real and writing from the heart. It comes off very forced.What did I like about the book? I really liked the little stories about the gardener. I want to know more about him! I especially found the part where she was not allowed to pick cabbage before a frost because the frost enhances the flavor. That is very invaluable information to a cook and a gardener like myself. It is now something I do and yes it makes a huge difference! I also liked the flow of the seasons from a cook and gardners point of view, but from another country. The recipes broken down by seasons after each story are nice

too. This book has value; the authors voice just comes off a bit pretentious to me and is the reason for the 3 stars.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Grandmamaread it before traveling to the Dordogne and want to try many of the recipes. a delightful book.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's such a delight to read and use!By M. CampbellI purchased this book as a gift for my wife, who is an avid gardener and cook. She is also an voracious reader who loves a good story. As a budding writer herself, she has described this book to me with this glowing comment, "It's such a delight to read! I can't put it down until I finish the chapter!!" I've come to trust her literary instincts over the years and must say that if she says it's great, then it is. Each of the 5 star reviews explain it far better than I ever could, but trust me when I say that it is worth your time and money to get this book.

The unique, award-winning cookbooks collection of seasonal recipes from a traditional French garden. Winner of the Best Book on France by a Non-French Writer Award at the Versailles Cookbook Fair; finalist for the Julia Child Award, the Gourmet Magazine Award, and "Best Cookbook of the Year" sponsored by IACP; and nominated in the international category of the KitchenAid Book Awards of the James Beard Foundation Awards. A unique blend of stylish cookbook and earthy garden story, here is a collection of 250 recipes derived from a centuries-old French kitchen garden. The stunning debut of a lively new culinary voice, *The Cook and the Gardener* chronicles a year in the life of the walled kitchen garden at Chateau du Fey and its taciturn, resourceful, charmingly sly peasant caretaker. Using the fruits and vegetables harvested from Monsieur Milbert's garden, Amanda Hesser creates four seasons of recipes tied ineluctably to the land and the all-but-forgotten practices upheld by Milbert. Hesser's sublimely simple recipes each with accessible ingredients and clear notes and instructions also tell a story. They are a month-by-month record of the ingredients available to her, so that this cookbook also serves as an almanac for cooks. Special "Basics" sections at the opening of each season lay the culinary groundwork for the recipes that follow. Tips on how to buy, store, and prepare particular vegetables, fruits, and herbs are presented in margin notes to recipes. By bringing the kitchen closer to the garden, *The Cook and the Gardener* gives home cooks a new understanding of the produce they have on hand, whether from the supermarket, the farmer's market, or their own gardens. At the same time, it captures the quirky customs and wily wisdom of a vanishing way of life in provincial France.

.com *The Cook and the Gardener* is Amanda Hesser's first book. From the opening lines of its introduction, her literary gifts are as evident as her passion for good food. Since this work combines recipes with her essays about Monsieur Milbert (the gardener at the Chateau du Fey in Burgundy, where Hesser worked as the cook), readers get to enjoy both of her talents. Hesser worked hard to get M. Milbert to talk with her. She shares the careful, deliberate way she wooed him, sometimes by bringing freshly baked bread to his less mobile wife, sometimes by holding back questions she wanted to ask, just to win his tolerance of her presence. Crusty, surly, and tradition-bound, he is the quintessential French peasant. Fortunately, Hesser--who is respectful and patient even when M. Milbert's stubborn ways exasperated her--knows he is an almost-vanished breed. None of his children, or anyone else, is likely to work as he has, continuing to live mainly off the land for nearly 60 years. Each chapter covers a month, starting with March, when the nearly 400-year-old walled garden comes to life. Hesser talks about the garden, how she used the bounty gathered by M. Milbert, and muses on life in and around Burgundy. In September, "the rains seemed to clean off and illuminate the plants' colors ... everything seemed to wake up, as after a hot, cranky nap." The final tomatoes are harvested, as are the green and butter beans, with Milbert sneakily keeping the best for himself. Hesser visits a neighbor's Portuguese-style garden, as exuberant and vivid as Milbert's is restrained and disciplined. She cooks sauted red snapper with tomatoes, fennel, and vermouth; makes a profound Tomato Consommé; and slow roasts tomatoes into meltingly tender mounds. Sepia drawings by Kate Gridley add to the low-key charm of this information-packed work. (It even includes a history of purslane going back to the Middle Ages.) The knowledge and maturity of this work belie Hesser's youth. Not yet 30 at the time of writing, she's a wise cook worth following. --Dana JacobiFrom Publishers WeeklyReaders who have been pining for a new literary cookbook need look no further. The cook of the title is the author, a staff reporter for the "Dining In/Dining Out" section of the New York Times. The gardener is a crusty, irascible French country gardener of considerable age and vast experience. Hesser met M. Milbert when she began cooking for Anne Willan, founder of the cooking school La Varenne, at Willan's estate in Burgundy, France, where Milbert and his wife were caretakers, a job they took on after selling their small farm. With respect and grace, Hesser describes her encounters with Milbert in his domain, the estate's one-acre garden, tracing four seasons' worth of interwoven gardening and cooking. Beginning in spring, Hesser makes use of what's freshest in such recipes as Early Carrots with Tarragon Beurre Blanc, Warm Roasted Shallots with Balsamic Vinegar and Braised Lamb with Garlic, Asparagus and Peas. Summer recipes range from Sauteed Duck with Artichokes to Zucchini-Lemon Soup, Striped Bass and Fennel and Seared Tomatoes with Olive Oil and Sage. In similar fashion, recipes for the fall and winter months make use of the seasons' offerings: Red Beets with Shallots and Sage, Pear-and-Almond Tart and White Sausages with Turnips and Butternut Squash. Like Milbert's approach to growing herbs, fruits and vegetables, Hesser's recipes follow the traditional French country techniques and are neither fussy nor marked by shortcuts. Seamlessly including basics?e.g., pastry doughs, stocks (one for each season), preserves and mayonnaises?in the introductions to the seasons, Hesser delivers a solid grounding for

beginning cooks as well; or at least for those whose interest is in preparing food with fresh ingredients (and who don't need to learn how to cook broccoli, which apparently Milbert didn't grow). Hesser's voice, as she carefully earns Milbert's trust, becoming finally in his words, *la petite jardiniere*, is as sure and convincing as is her hand in the kitchen. Cooks who pick from Hesser's 200 month-by-month recipes will easily imagine themselves at least momentarily transported to the French countryside. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

Hesser, now a reporter for the New York Times food section, was for two years the chef at a chateau in Burgundy, and she has written a month-by-month account with recipes of her experience there. She spent a fair amount of time trying to befriend the crusty gardener, with eventual success, and learned a great deal from him. Her book follows the seasons, each section opening with basic recipes (e.g., canning tomatoes, peaches, and plums for summer); recipes for each month are introduced by an essay touching on the progress of the kitchen garden, Monsieur Milbert's plans and travails during those weeks, and other aspects of life in Burgundy. Hesser relied on the garden for her inspiration as she cooked, only rarely visiting the market in the adjoining town to find fruits and vegetables for her recipes: Early Carrots with Tarragon Beurre Blanc, Baby Potatoes in Hazelnut Oil, Lamb Roasted with a Family of Onions. Both gardeners and cooks will enjoy this; recommended for most cookery collections. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.