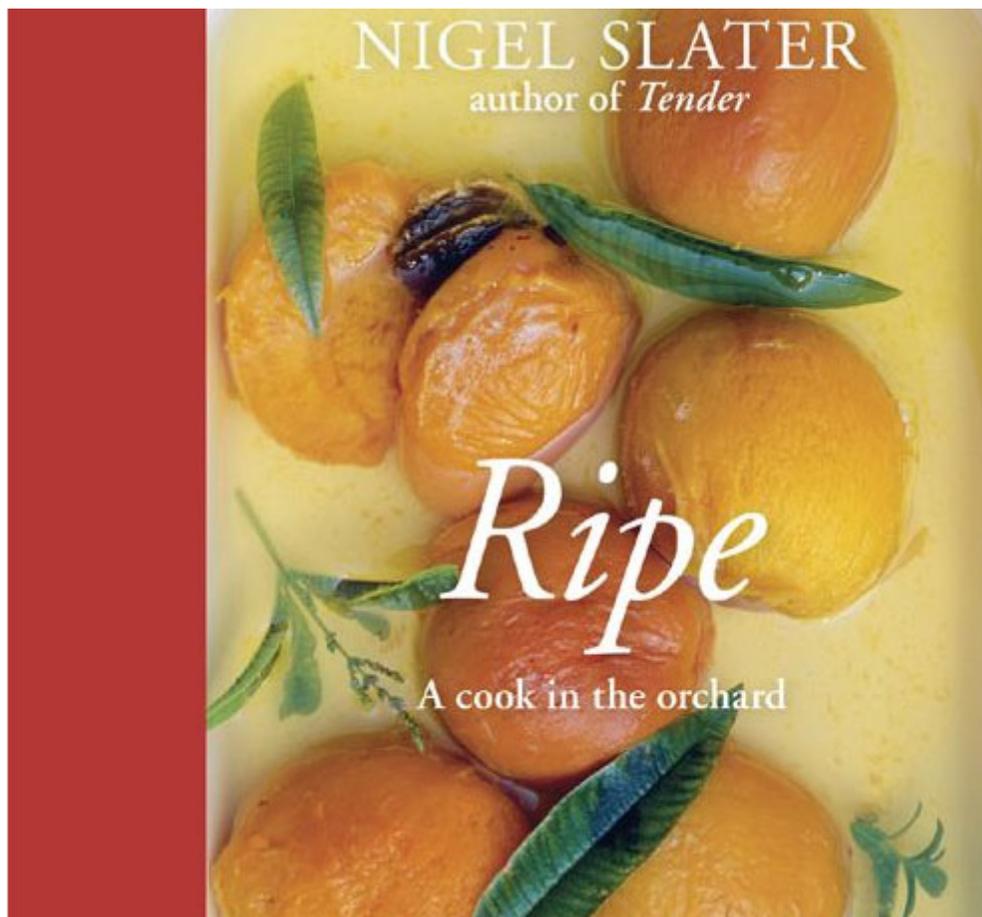


If Skittles hadn't already trademarked the slogan "taste the rainbow," we would be nominating it for ***Ripe***, the produce-centric cookbook from [Cheryl Sternman Rule](#), the voice behind [5 Second Rule](#). *Ripe* takes you on a colorful journey through the world of fruits and vegetables, making it a perfect gift for your artistic friend. It begins with reds and pinks (think cranberries, tomatoes, and grapefruits), meanders through oranges and yellows (hello, butternut squash and persimmons), moves onto greens (like kale and favas), blues and purple edibles such as eggplant and blackberries, and ends up in the earthy toned realm of onions and mushrooms. It's not only a gorgeous book, but it's also full of great tips as well.

Favorite recipes: [Honeydew Salad with Poppy Seed Dressing](#); [Eggplant Romesco Rigatoni](#); [Toasted Nori Edamame with Garlic-Chile Oil](#)

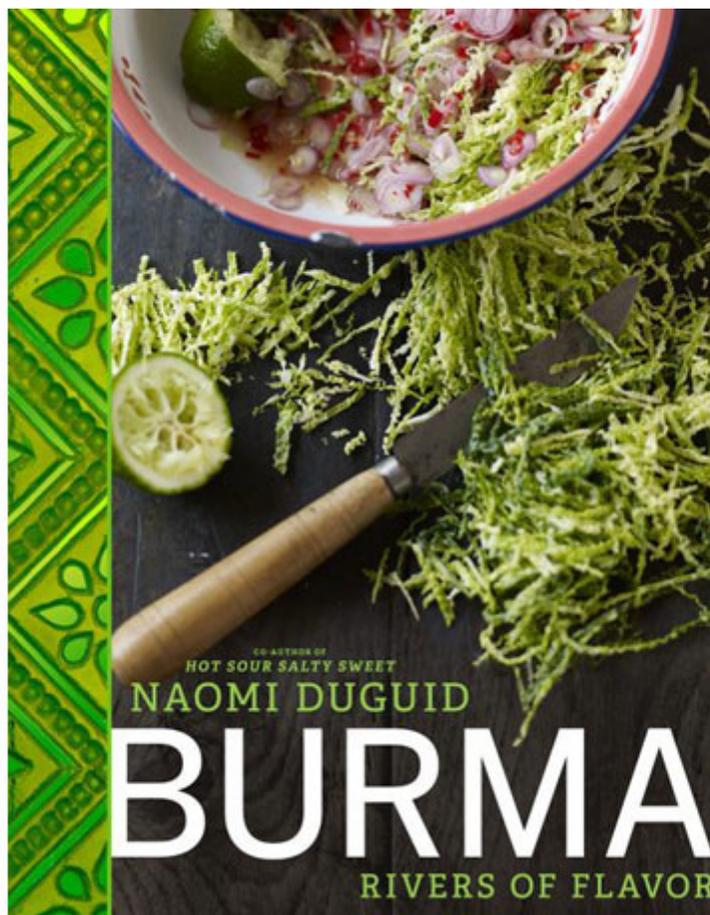
***Ripe* by Nigel Slater**



Yes, you read correctly. In 2012, there was not one, but two cookbooks aptly named "Ripe." Nigel Slater's *Ripe: A Cook in the Orchard* is not color-centric; instead it focuses on elegantly detailed preparations for all manner of fruits grown in and around his orchard in England. Slater's uniquely philosophical (but not patronizing) voice and casual recipe style makes for a relaxing, informative read. Think of *Ripe* more as a guide to utilizing fruit to its greatest potential than a strict textbook of technique. Slater encourages thoughtful experimentation.

Favorite recipes: [Crisp Pork Belly](#), [Sweet Peach Salsa](#); [A Salad of Game, Grapes, and Verjuice](#); [Duck with Figs and Barolo](#)

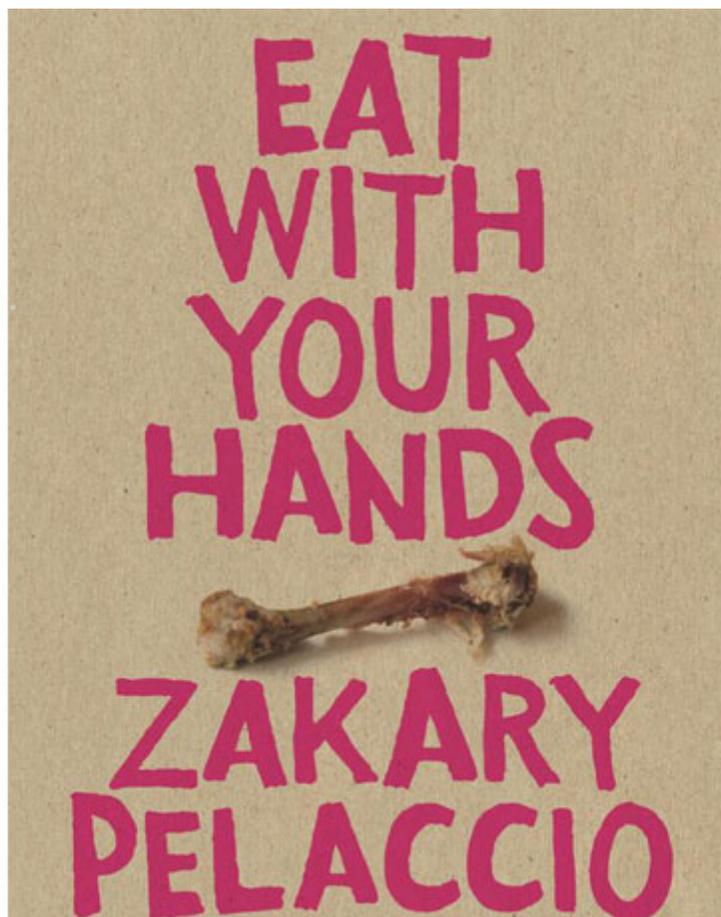
***Burma: Rivers of Flavor* by Naomi Duguid**



2012 was a banner year for Asian cookbooks, but for the best of the best, turn to James Beard Award-winning author [Naomi Duguid's](#) fall release: ***Burma: Rivers of Flavor***. Following in the footsteps of her other fabulously detailed and photographed books (*Beyond the Great Wall*, *Hot Sour Salty Sweet*, and *Mangoes and Curry Leaves* for starters), *Burma* takes the reader on a culinary expedition through every aspect of the cuisine, from vibrant and funky salads to rich meat curries and soul-warming soups. And there's more to the book than just recipes. Duguid is an apt observer of culture, as she interweaves stories of religion, politics, and family throughout the book.

Favorite Recipes: [Golden Egg Curry](#); [Kachin Pounded Beef with Herbs](#); [Coconut Sauce Noodles](#).

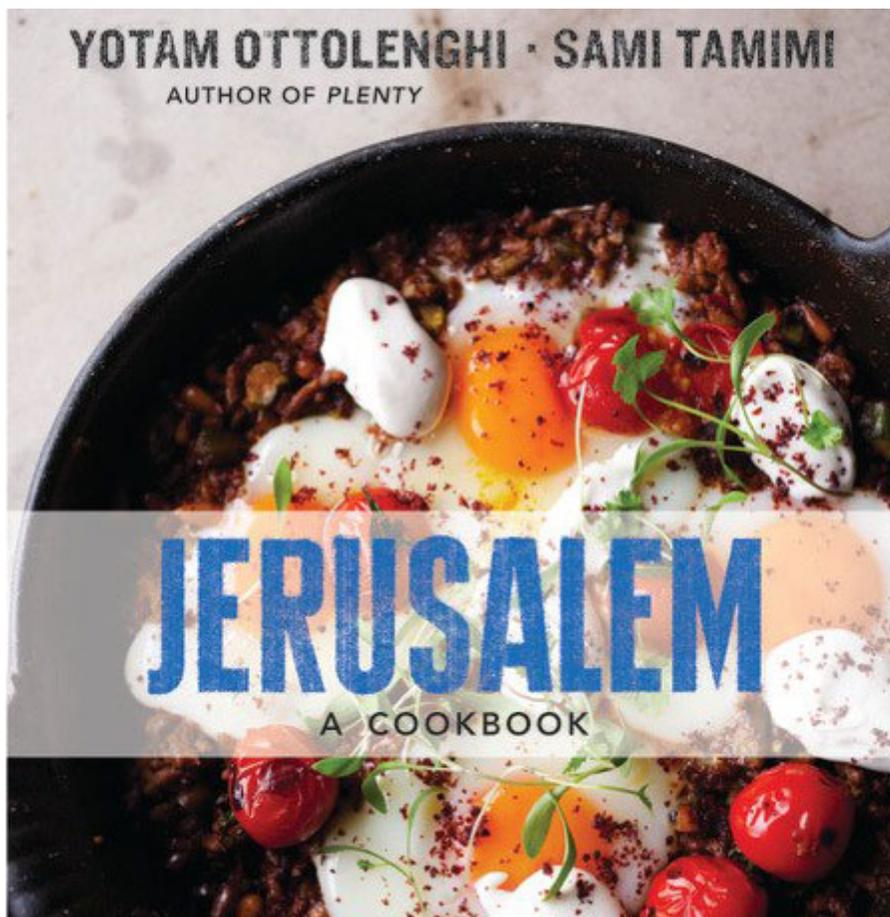
***Eat with Your Hands* by Zakary Pelaccio**



There aren't too many cookbooks out there that are peppered with the F-word, but ***Eat with Your Hands*** by [Zakary Pelaccio](#), the leader of the [Fatty family](#) of restaurants—including Fatty Crab, Fatty 'Cue, and Fatty Snack—is at the top of that list. *Eat with Your Hands* is a guide to replicating Pelaccio's cool take on Southeast Asian eating at home. It is unique but also accessible, written in a tone that makes even the most exotic ingredient or unfamiliar technique seem doable, and fun even. *Eat with Your Hands* also annotates each recipe with not only a beverage pairing but also suggested listening.

Favorite recipes: [Asparagus Kerabu](#); [Curry Leaf Fried Chicken](#); [Lamb Burgers](#)

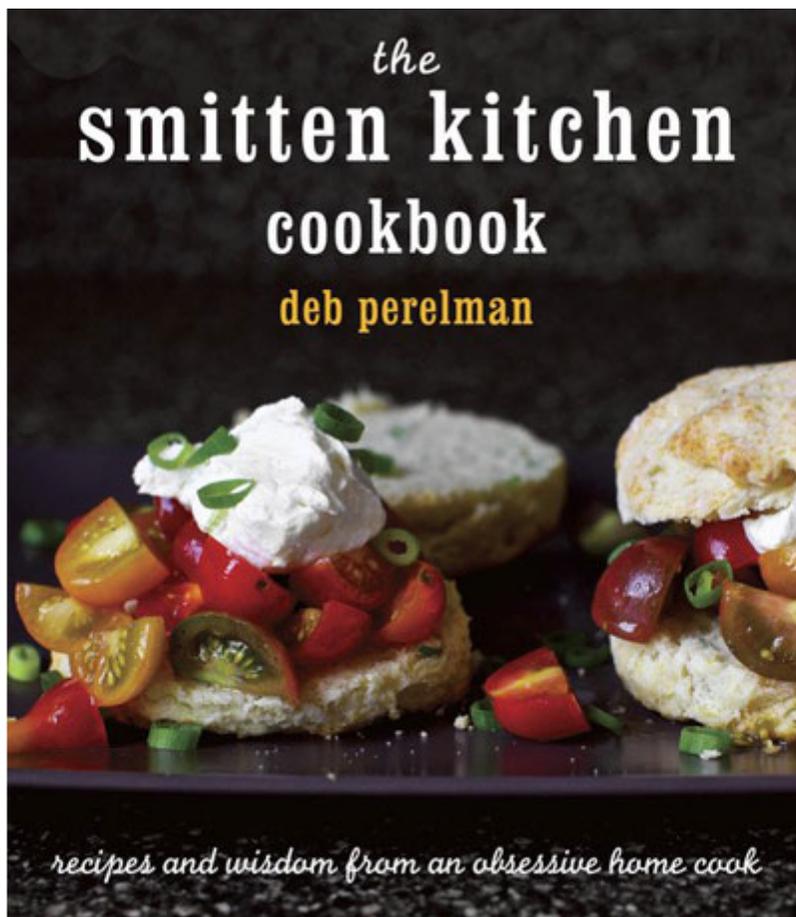
***Jerusalem* by Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi**



During a time of great conflict and sadness in Israel, [Yotam Ottolenghi](#) and [Sami Tamimi's](#) *Jerusalem: A Cookbook* is a breath of fresh air. Not only does the book present a rich tapestry of recipes, breathtaking photographs, and beautiful essays, but it also offers a glimpse into Jerusalem's vast diversity of peoples and the food they prize most. Both chefs were born in Jerusalem (in the same year, no less), yet they each bring distinctly different cultural experiences to the table: Ottolenghi is Jewish and Tamimi is Palestinian. Their seamless coalescence of traditional recipes from both cultures (as well as many others represented in Jerusalem) offers an uplifting and exciting view of the city. On top of all this, they've included the single-greatest hummus recipe of all time. Make it and swoon.

Favorite Recipes: [Mejadra](#); [Na'ama's Fattoush](#); [Hummus Kawarma with Lemon Sauce](#)

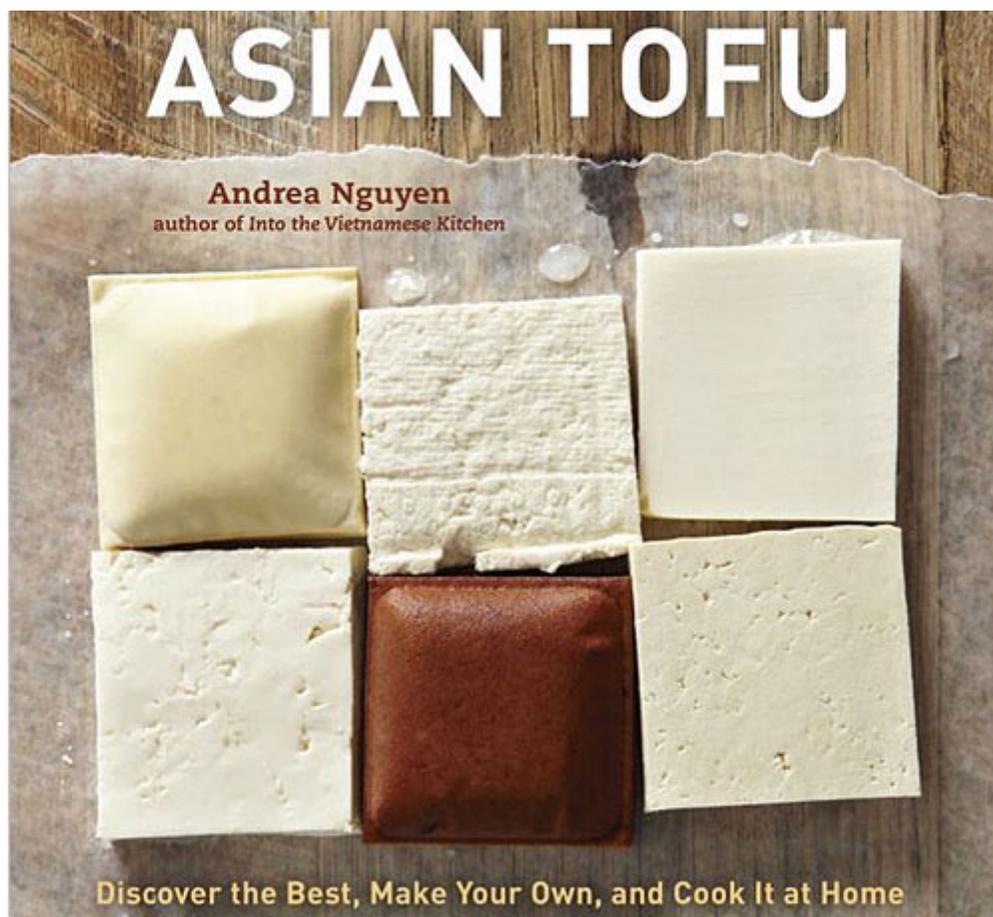
The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook by Deb Perelman



[Deb Perelman](#) has been cooking (and tweaking) recipes for over six years on her blog [Smitten Kitchen](#), making her one of the most popular and prolific food bloggers online. Her first cookbook, *The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook* came out this fall. While the recipes stick to Perelman's general oeuvre (vibrant yet comforting meals) the featured dishes are (for the most part) unique to the book. As on her blog, the recipes are tested and adapted for even the smallest kitchens; many are excellent weeknight solutions, but there are more than a few entertaining-worthy recipes scattered throughout.

Favorite Recipes: Fingerlings Vinaigrette with Sieved Eggs and Pickled Celery; Mushroom Bourguignon; Harvest Roast Chicken with Grapes, Olives, and Rosemary.

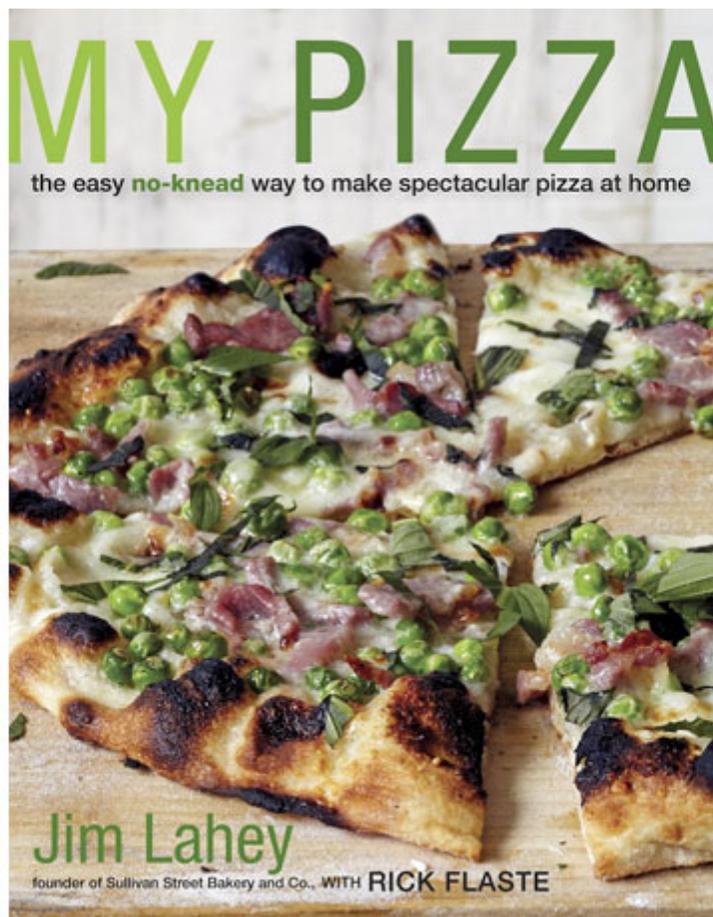
Asian Tofu by Andrea Nguyen



A whole cookbook devoted to tofu? Yes, please. [Andrea Nguyen's](#) *Asian Tofu* is a gorgeous guide to all things bean curd. Beginning with recipes for making your own tofu at home, Nguyen acts as a guide through the world of tofu enjoyment, a world that goes way beyond tofu's hippie health food staple reputation. She's put together a colorful selection of tofu recipes designed highlight the wonderfully versatile world of bean curd, including dishes as disparate as Fermented Tofu, Lemongrass, and Goat Skewers and Tofu Blancmange with Cured Pineapple and Lime.

Favorite Recipes: [Spicy-Sweet Fried Tofu Buns](#); [Saag Soy Paneer](#); [Silken Tofu and Edamame Soup](#)

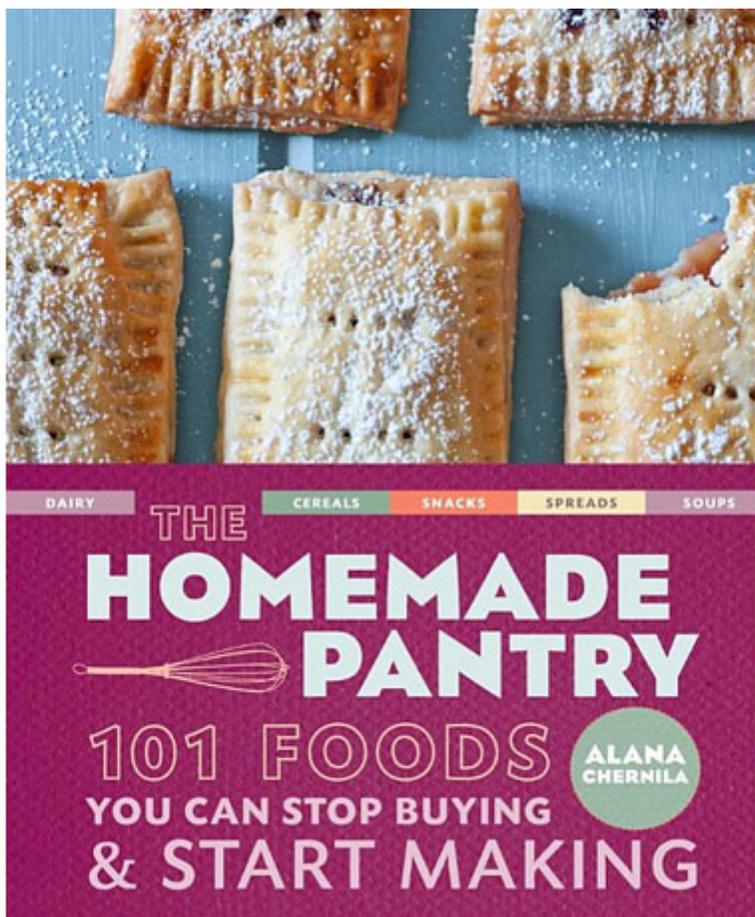
My Pizza by Jim Lahey



Revolutionary is a word that gets tossed around a little too frequently in the world of recipe writing. Really, how many recipes are truly revolutionary? Well, Jim Lahey's No-Knead Bread really is. It's a recipe that got everyday folks (read apprehensive bakers) into the kitchen with the confidence that they, in fact, could bake really great artisan bread within the confines of their home kitchens. With his 2012 release, *My Pizza*, Lahey lets all the pizza nerds get in on the no-knead action. The book adapts recipes from his New York pizzeria Co. using his no-knead method. It's full of creative pies topped with gorgeous and unexpected combos like corn and tomato, squash and pumpkin seeds, and brussels sprouts and chestnuts, as the non-pizza offerings that make Co. such a gem.

Favorite Recipes: Pizza Bianca; Basic Tomato Sauce; Bird's Nest Pie

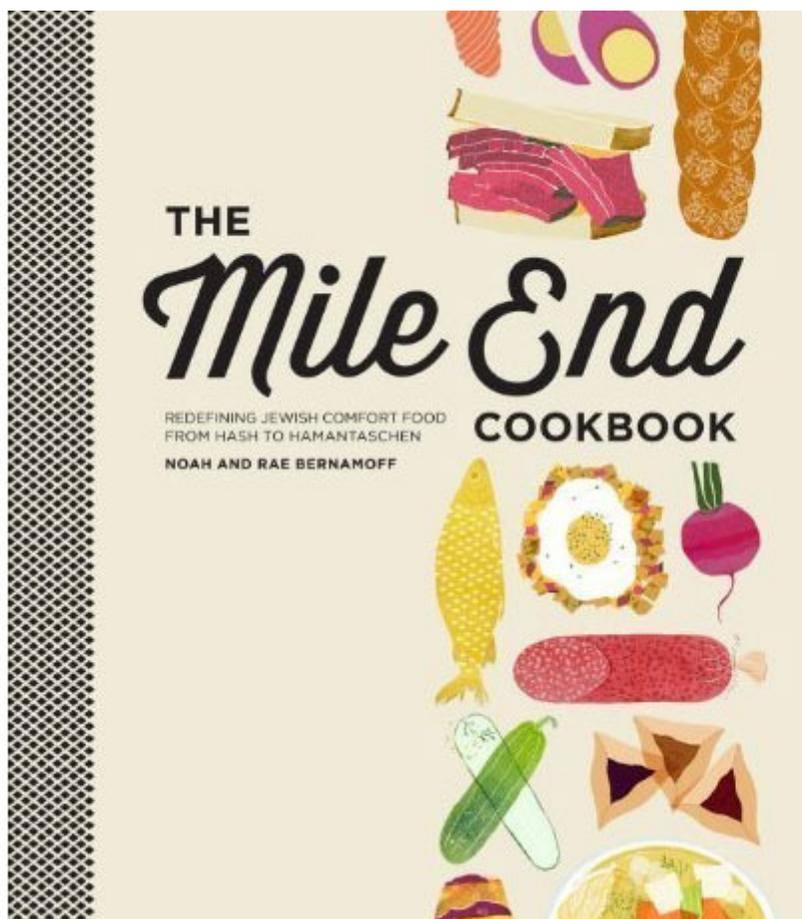
The Homemade Pantry by Alana Chernila



Whether to save money or follow the latest trend, making pantry staples from scratch is an exercise de rigueur in many home kitchens these days. And while there were quite a few books offering DIY recipes this year, **Alana Chernila's** *The Homemade Pantry* was certainly the most comprehensive. With simple recipes for everything from ketchup and mustard to ricotta and mozzarella, *The Homemade Pantry* is not only a really fun cookbook, but also a real eye-opener. After all, when was the last time you whipped up a batch of butter at home? It's not only easy but thrilling and not nearly as time-consuming as you'd imagine.

Favorite Recipes: [Butter](#); [Corn Tortillas](#); [Ricotta Cheese](#)

The Mile End Cookbook by Noah and Rae Bernamoff



Noah and Rae Bernamoff , the enterprising duo behind Brooklyn's (and now Manhattan's) Mile End Deli , released an impressively comprehensive deli cookbook this year, perfect for anyone with a taste for towering meaty sandwiches. *The Mile End Cookbook* first lays the groundwork for homemade charcuterie, smoked meats (chicken and fish as well as brisket), pickles, and spreads. The second half looks more like a standard cookbook, with recipes for most of what you'll find on their menu. You can choose to make each of their sandwiches totally from scratch, from the meat to the bread, or take a few shortcuts if you're really craving that roast beef on weck.

Favorite recipes: Chicken Soup with Soup Mandel; Tsimis; Roast Beef with Pickled Horseradish.