

Cook the Book: 'My Irish Table' by Cathal Armstrong

KATE WILLIAMS



Happy Saint Patrick's! I'm sure many of you celebrated the holiday over the weekend with green drinks and general revelry. I'm here to suggest that you continue the Irish celebration with food—not just today, but all week long.

What better way to extend the holiday than by cooking along with famed Irish restaurateur, **Cathal Armstrong** ? Armstrong is the chef of several DC-area Irish joints, including Obama favorite Restaurant Eve . His debut cookbook, *My Irish Table* , explores everything from his Irish homeland to his current career in fine dining.

My Irish Table opens with a bang—the resounding thud of a platter loaded with a classic full Irish breakfast. Armstrong pulls out all the stops with this breakfast, outlining recipes for everything from homemade back rashers and black pudding to simple broiled tomatoes. If you've got the stomach capacity for it, Armstrong's Irish breakfast is sure to cure just about any lingering celebratory headache you've got.

Beyond the breakfast pages, you'll find a collection of Armstrong's mother's dishes; a chapter each on fish, vegetables, and baked goods; a set of celebratory dishes grouped by holiday; and, of course, a section devoted to refined dishes from the restaurant. But this chapter does not dominate the book—Armstrong's cooking is nothing but approachable. One can see glimmers of his classical training on just about every page. Armstrong provides a core set of stocks and sauces that he uses to build everything from a simple Irish stew to whole baked fish, adding restaurant-level depth of flavor to even the homiest dishes. Yet for those looking for quick meals, it's easy to take a few shortcuts and still produce a darn good dinner.

This week, we'll start things off with a St. Patty's Day-worthy **shepherd's pie**. Then we'll brine a batch of Irish **piccalilli relish** and take a stab at a **refined blue cheese course** from Restaurant Eve. Later in the week, we'll simmer the **chicken stew** Armstrong ate after cooking for the president and finally cook up a slab of **boiling bacon**.

Win 'My Irish Table'

Thanks to our friends at Ten Speed Press, we have five (5) copies of *My Irish Table* to give away this week. All you need to do for a chance to win is to tell us about **your ultimate St. Patrick's Day meal** in the comments section below.