

# Cook the Book: 'Try This at Home' by Richard Blais

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I'd venture to guess that almost anyone with a television knows the name or at least the spiky blonde coif of **Richard Blais**. He's one of the most successful Top Chef alums. After competing twice (and winning once), Blais has opened a few restaurants in the Atlanta area including the mini-chain, FLIP Burger. Over the last several years, his style of cooking has morphed from a strict allegiance to all things molecular to a less technical, yet still whimsical, take on Americana.

Given Blais's omnipresence, it's a bit surprising that he's waited so long to release a cookbook. Sure, he's shared recipes through various Top Chef-related ventures, but *Try This at Home* is his first solo book venture. Think of it as a Richard Blais greatest hits album. It's a substantial cookbook with a balanced array of recipes from easy and simple roasts to complex, multifaceted and molecular plates.

Liquid nitrogen appears often, and you'll be asked to sous vide, smoke, and pressure cook more than a few times. Still, this is no *Modernist Cuisine*. Blais offers plenty of hacks for the non-modernist kitchen, and offers plenty of substitutes for hard to find ingredients or particularly difficult techniques. The result is an extremely approachable take on a chef-y cookbook; he'll draw you in with the easier recipes and then make you want to stick around and test out the crazy techniques.

There is an underlying Southern current in many of Blais's recipes; versions of dishes like chicken fried steak, boiled peanuts, and pimento cheese pepper the book. This comes as little surprise knowing that Blais is a transplant to Atlanta (soon to be the Bay Area?). He also includes some of his hits from FLIP and his newest restaurant, *The Spence*, in addition to some Top Chef favorites. In general, think classic American food with a playful and intelligent twist.

This week, we'll try out a number of boisterous Blais creations. First, we'll fry up **Pimento Jack Cheese Sandwiches**, and toss a **Smoked Caesar Salad**. Next, we'll slow cook **Brisket with Coriander, Black Pepper, and Brown Sugar** and then tackle **Barely Smoked Salmon** with many accouterments. Finally we will round out the week with a Top Chef classic, **Potato "Linguine" with Conch and White Wine**.

## Win 'Try This at Home'

Thanks to our good friends at Clarkston Potter, we have five (5) copies of *Try This at Home* to give away this week. All you need to do to win is tell us your **favorite twist on a classic American dish** in the comments section below.