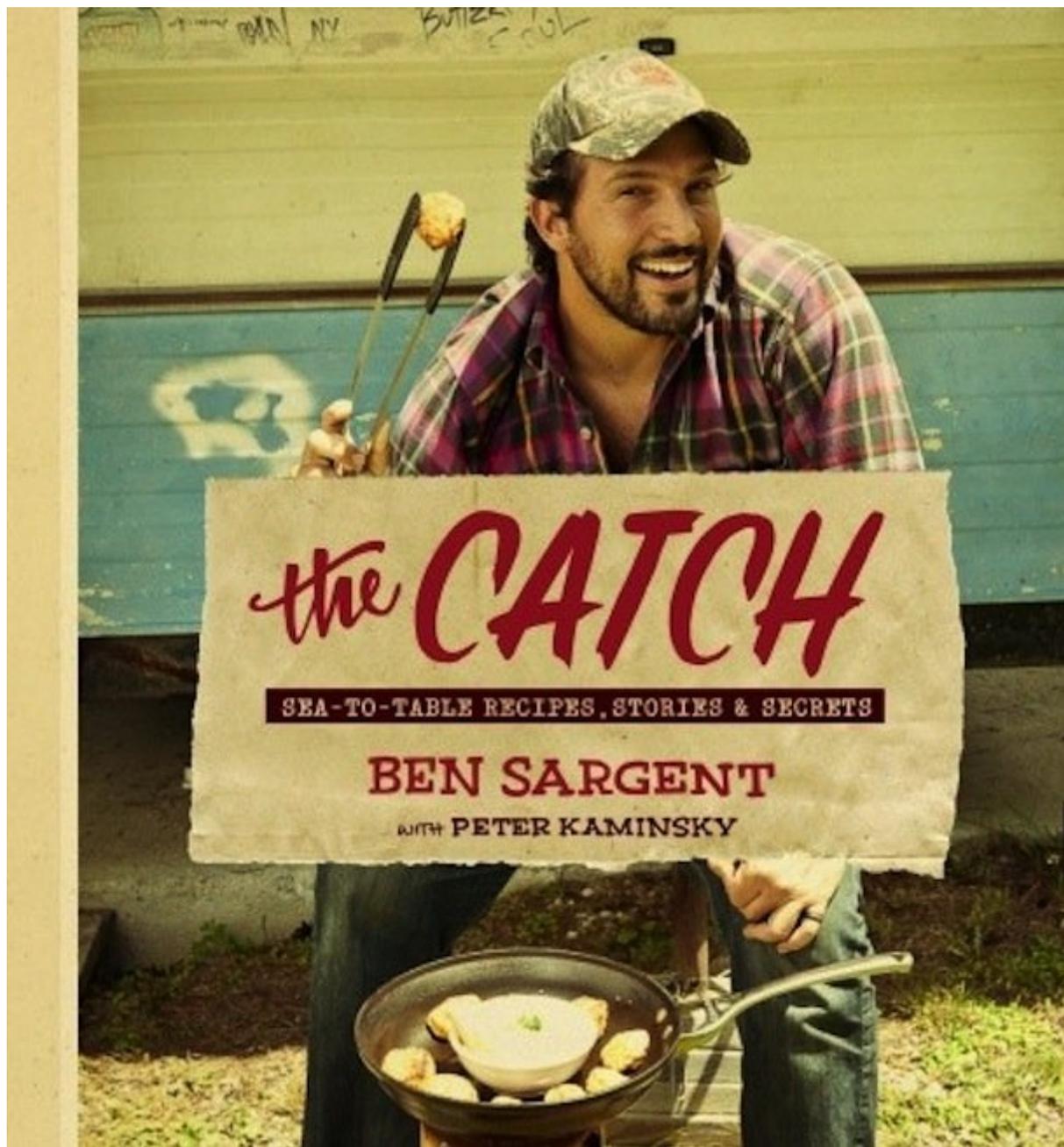


# Cook the Book: 'The Catch'

KATE WILLIAMS



I am not usually one to clamor toward glossy cookbooks from television food stars. So the new release from Cooking Channel celeb **Ben Sargent**, of *Hook, Line, and Dinner*, wasn't exactly at the top of my to-read list. But after spending a few days cooking from his new book, *The Catch*, it's become clear to me that Sargent is more than just a pretty face. This dude can cook.

*The Catch* is a super laid-back cookbook, indicative of Sargent's background as a surfer and fisherman. The writing is casual, occasionally funny, and full of personal anecdotes. But just because the book is informal doesn't mean it isn't informative.

Sargent covers a huge range of fish and shellfish with an eye (as most cooks these days do) towards sustainable fishing and sourcing practices. There are eleven—yes *eleven*—different chowders featured in addition to a whirlwind of different cuisines. The grill makes many appearances throughout the book, but there's still plenty to cook in cooler months, like pan-roasted salmon and fried catfish sandwiches. None of the recipes are particularly difficult, so *The Catch* makes for a great introductory cookbook for anyone wanting to get better at cooking seafood.

My biggest quibble is the lack of information about substitutions. As anyone who has bought fresh seafood knows, you won't always be able to find what you're looking for. Sure, you can usually find salmon, trout, and shrimp of some kind. But fish like bluefish, grouper, or mahimahi aren't always available. Suggestions for simple swaps (or else when you should use exactly what is listed) would have made the book even more useful.

We're cooking a wide range of seafood this week. We'll start, as Sargent does, with shellfish. First, we'll steam a pot of **spicy mussels fra diavolo**, and then toss together a simple and elegant bowl of **sea urchin spaghetti**. Later in the week, we'll move on to the big fish—we'll grill **flounder in grape leaves**, sear **plantain-crusted mahi**, and boil up a **chowder full of striped bass**.

## Win 'The Catch'

Thanks to our friends at Clarkson Potter, we have five (5) copies of *The Catch* to give away this week. All you need to do for a chance to win is tell us about **your favorite seafood dish** in the comments section below.