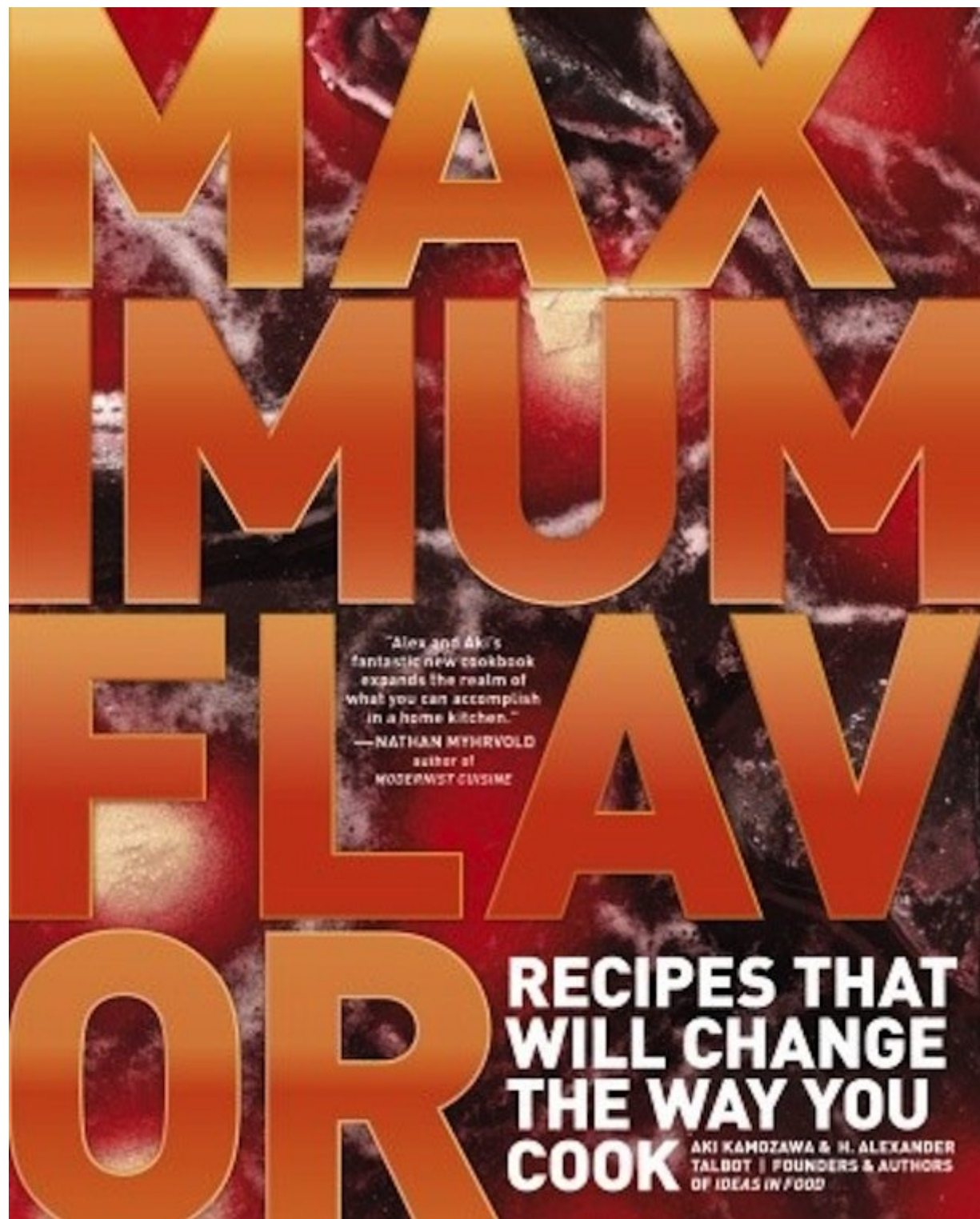


# Cook the Book: 'Maximum Flavor'

KATE WILLIAMS



I like to think of myself as a fairly low-tech cook. My favorite piece of kitchen equipment is my Dutch oven, I don't own a microwave, and my most oft-used electrical appliance is my tiny immersion blender. I've come to love pounding spices in my mortar and pestle, and I'd much rather mix up a pie crust with my fingers than drag out (and wash) my hand-me-

down food processor. So perhaps, on the surface, I am not the target audience for *Maximum Flavor*, the new cookbook from the *Ideas in Food* gurus **Aki Kamoza** and **H. Alexander Talbot**.

However, despite my lack of "modernist" equipment, I am a curious (dare I say, nerdy) person, eager to learn new culinary techniques. And I am a big fan of Kamoza and Talbot's work. The couple started out journaling their kitchen experiments online before launching a culinary consulting company dedicated to creative problem solving and the bettering of kitchens everywhere. Their first book, *Ideas in Food*, was, much like their blog, a handbook of experiments and concepts. *Maximum Flavor*, on the other hand, is designed like a traditional cookbook.

Inside, there are recipes for steaks, cakes, breads, pickles, and soups—each can be read as a set of directions for cooking a meal, but *Maximum Flavor* is more useful if each recipe is used as a jumping-off point for experimentation. There's a technical trick embedded in just about every dish in the book that not only helps improve the recipe itself, but it also can be read as an idea on its own. Take the deviled eggs and bacon, for example. As a traditional recipe, it is a multi-day process for a quirky take on an American classic. But if you don't care to candy bacon or embellish your eggs with pepper jelly, you can still learn how to steam eggs instead of hard boiling them, or how to brine them for a boost in flavor. Whichever path you take, there is still plenty to learn.

And for every three-day deviled egg recipe, there is a simpler weeknight dish, like the potatoes roasted in a bed of lemons and onions. For barely more effort than tossing a tray of spuds in the oven, you can have a plate of fragrant, buttery potatoes as a Wednesday treat or a holiday side. Many of the recipes call for pieces of equipment that aren't necessarily common appliances, but nothing Kamoza and Talbot use is particularly expensive—and they've almost persuaded me to make room for a pressure cooker in my kitchen.

We're going to have a lot of fun playing with our food this week. We'll make those **deviled eggs** and **lemon roasted potatoes** in addition to **cilantro-scented Thai beef salad**, **creamed spinach with citrus kosho**, and **Korean-style chicken wings**.

## Win 'Maximum Flavor'

Thanks to our friends at Clarkson Potter, we have five (5) copies of *Maximum Flavor* to give away this week. All you need to do for a chance to win a copy is tell us about **a cooking technique or trick you'd like to learn** in the comments section below.