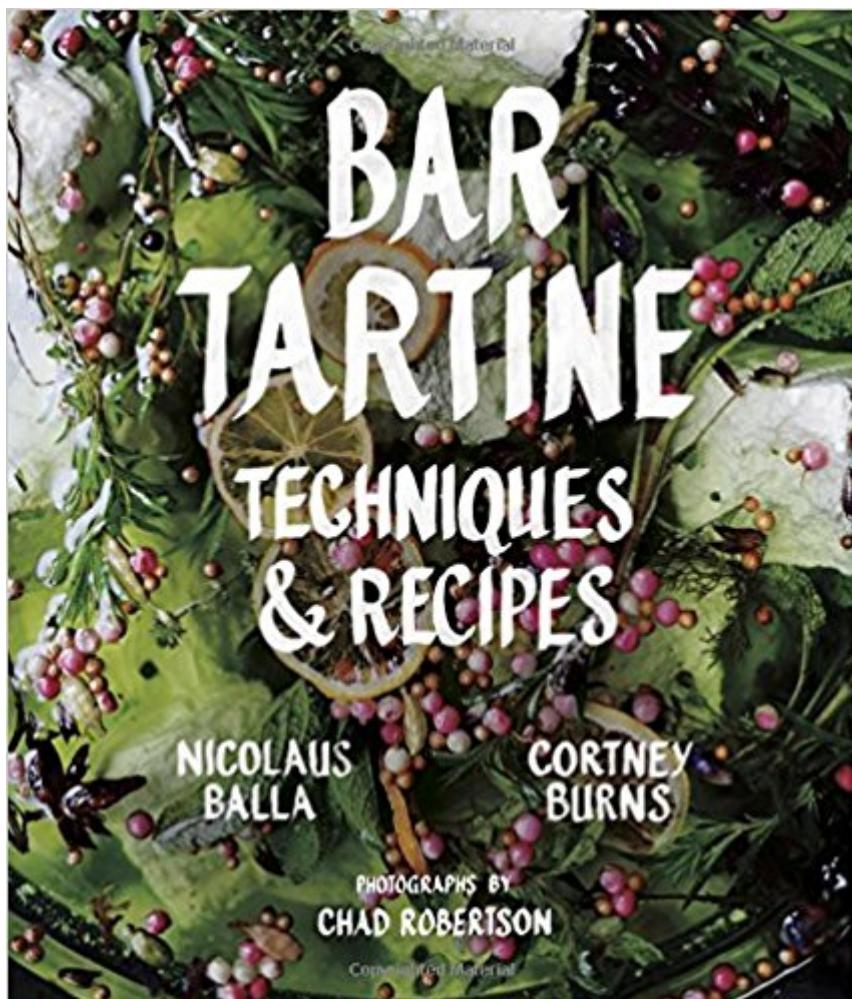


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Bar Tartine: Techniques & Recipes



Synopsis

Here's a cookbook destined to be talked-about this season, rich in techniques and recipes epitomizing the way we cook and eat now. Bar Tartineâ "co-founded by Tartine Bakery's Chad Robertson and Elisabeth Prueittâ "is obsessed over by locals and visitors, critics and chefs. It is a restaurant that defies categorization, but not description: Everything is made in-house and layered into extraordinarily flavorful food. Helmed by Nick Balla and Cortney Burns, it draws on time-honored processes (such as fermentation, curing, pickling), and a core that runs through the cuisines of Central Europe, Japan, and Scandinavia to deliver a range of dishes from soups to salads, to shared plates and sweets. With more than 150 photographs, this highly anticipated cookbook is a true original.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The philosophy behind this book is immediately apparent: the first 150 pages contain recipes for ingredients, not dishes. But what ingredients! Goat cheese, pork fat chile oil, rice vinegar, Brussels sprouts, fig leaf syrup, mushroom broth, karasumi/bottarga(!) An entire other category is powders - onion, garlic, yoghurt, rice koji, kale, parsnip, sauerkraut - that are bright and fresh and perfect for inventive sous vide recipes. One warning though: the recipe for black garlic (put garlic heads in a slow cooker set on Warm, for two weeks) mentions the intense smell: I confirm that it can go through walls. But back to that mushroom broth: it is ordinarily made with water and a few mushrooms, and is invariably insipid; this recipe cooks LOTS of fresh mushrooms at low temperature for hours then extracts all the liquid from them, is all. The recipe made so much sense

that it was the first thing I made. It's easily the best mushroom broth in the world, but these guys also include a recipe to further reduce it to an emulsion, good grief. The recipes for dishes, when they finally start, are very inventive and just as uncompromising. Cabbage rolls with fish cake starts with the recipe for making fish cake. The result is probably not that different from wrapping store-bought fish cake with cabbage (a pairing made in Heaven), but hey: now I can invent new fish cakes laced with (say) white anchovies,

I've had this inspiring, creative food-making guide for about 6 months now and it has yet to be returned to my cookbook shelves. It's probably the most original cookbook I've ever read and it has become essential in my kitchen. Yet, I wouldn't recommend it to everyone. This is definitely not a beginner's book nor a "what's for dinner tonight" recipe collection. This is a guide to building a pantry of do-it-yourself food additives that will punch flavor into your food. The actual recipes, which are only about half of the book, serve as inspiration for using some of those ingredients you've charred, dehydrated, sprouted, fermented and cultured in the first half of the guide. Of course, homemade garlic powder may at first blush seem a "you've got to be kidding me" directive if you're starting one of the recipes in the second half of the book and see it listed in the ingredients. Well, if you just want to make that particular recipe, you don't have to make the garlic powder; you can easily substitute store-bought. But if it's garlic season and you saw a great deal at the farmer's market and maybe you bought more than you can really use, why not dehydrate some and make powder for future use? I'm slowly adding things to my pantry as I have time and abundance of raw materials. Another reason I wouldn't recommend this book to a beginning cook is that blindly following the recipes may not always yield the best result. Recipes that include a sauce, for example, often yield excessive amounts of sauce. This is a common occurrence in cookbooks from restaurants, probably because the chefs are accustomed to preparing large quantities of sauces for use in multiple dishes.

Reading this book, for me, is akin to a middle-aged, every-other-weekend hiker with an aching knee reading a book about how to climb Mt. Everest. That hiker may really, really enjoy reading that book. And her hiking experiences may allow her to greatly appreciate all of the work that goes into climbing Mt. Everest, but the truth is, she will never, ever climb that mountain! Bar Tartine is a lovely book. The photographs are stunning. The recipes are creative and complex. I might, someday, try one of them. I will not be making any of these recipes anytime soon for a few reasons. As I'm sure the other reviews have mentioned again and again, each recipe calls for one or more ingredients

that one must prepare using the techniques section that comprises the first half of the book. These ingredients are brined, pickled, smoked, dried, powdered, smoked, burnt, smoked then powdered...etc. I just do not have enough refrigerator space to devote to 10+ vats of various foods, in various stages of being transformed from simple to delicious. I live in Europe, and the fridges here tend to be small (note to any Europeans reading this, none of the things in this book will fit in your fridge, but if you are a native European, you may be braver than I when it comes to not refrigerating things). Also, only one person that I know in my town owns a gas oven, and it is the kind without a pilot light, so all of those dried food recipes are out. The other thing is, for all of the time spent on techniques, there is very little information about how to use the resulting pickles and powders and sauces, other than in other equally daunting recipes at the end of the book.

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