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The New Midwestern Table: 200 Heartland Recipes



Synopsis

“The Midwest is rising,” writes Minnesota native Amy Thielen, host of Heartland Table on Food Network and her engaging, keenly American debut cookbook, with 200 recipes that herald a revival in the region’s cuisine, is delicious proof. Amy Thielen grew up in rural northern Minnesota, waiting in lines for potluck buffets amid loops of smoked sausages from her uncle’s meat market and in the company of women who could put up jelly without a recipe. She spent years cooking in some of New York City’s best restaurants, but it took moving home in 2008 for her to rediscover the wealth and diversity of the Midwestern table, and to witness its reinvention. The New Midwestern Table reveals all that she and her family come to love and learn about the foods of her native Midwest, through updated classic recipes and numerous encounters with spirited home cooks and some of the region’s most passionate food producers. With 150 color photographs capturing these fresh-from-the-land dishes and the striking beauty of the terrain, this cookbook will cause any home cook to fall in love with the captivating flavors of the American heartland.

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“The New Midwestern Table is a book to get excited about. Being more accustomed to regional Italian myself, it is simply wonderful to discover and become engaged in regional American cuisine. Amy’s Midwestern table is a richly woven tapestry of nature’s bounty, and a tale of the passionate love and gentle care that goes into its preparation. Finding yourself lost in the folds of this culinary story filled with delicious recipes is an exciting journey, and one I most certainly recommend. Lidia Bastianich “We read Amy Thielen’s work with the same excitement that readers from outside the South must have felt upon first encountering Edna Lewis and Bill Neal in the 1970s and 1980s, when they learned that Southern cooking was diverse, deeply rooted in the landscape, and compelling. The New Midwestern Table marks the debut of a major new voice in American cooking. Matt Lee and Ted Lee “Amy Thielen’s beautiful book honors a cuisine that is all too often ignored or disrespected by bicoastal trend seekers: heartland fare that is nourishing in all sorts of ways. To cook from this book is to partake of precious national tradition. To eat from it is to savor food unique to America, with roots all around the world. For the Lace Potato Pancakes recipe alone, The New Midwestern Table earns a prominent place on our shelf of favorites. Jane and Michael Stern “Amy allows us all to see our American culinary history through the eyes of an experienced, talented, and hungry, contemporary chef. She uses her training and imagination to recognize the full potential of her native Midwestern landscape highlighted with delicious foods, flavorful family traditions, excellent producers, and a society eager to reconnect with a distinctive, regional dining culture. Michael Anthony “Thielen has done the impossible, breaking new ground on a well-worn food meme. Like finding the perfect new leather coat that looks like gramps wore it for decades, she has channeled a seemingly brilliant incongruity. In hybridizing her northern prairie cool grandma meets modernist-craftsman gastronaut, she has defined the food of our place in a way that’s never been done before. Beautifully written, culturally meaningful, and loaded with brilliant cookery, The New Midwestern Table dances on a wire with one foot in the twenty-first century and the other in the nineteenth. Andrew Zimmern “I’m biased on the Midwestern book, as it’s my home turf, but the Minnesotan Thielen, who logged serious years as a cook and chef at some of the best restaurants in Manhattan until she began a family, brings new life to recipes that are so at home in this part of America, dishes featuring our lake fish and our abundant venison, and vibrant takes on pot roasts and meat pies, recipes from simple salads to more elaborate preparations for headcheese and red current jelly.”--Michael Ruhlman

Amy Thielen delivers much more than a cookbook as she offers a brief history on the Midwest, and her experience of cooking in Manhattan's fine-dining kitchens. The heartwarming presentation in her introduction and notes throughout the book is inviting, and interesting. Amy Thielen portrays great tradition of American country cooking, as she discusses praise-worthy Midwestern restaurants. Her tour through the Midwest captivates the heart and soul, especially for anyone who has not visited, or lived there. There are several mouth-watering recipes with helpful tips, which also include the number of servings. The stunning photos of prepared meals, along with famous places in the Midwest are delightful, and refreshing. We tried the Fried Onion Dip, which was delicious. In addition, there are recipes for various dips. Some of the recipes include: Freshly Ground Black Pepper; Cheese-Balls; Homemade Italian Sausage; Old-Fashioned Pounded Cheese With Walnuts And Port Syrup; Steakhouse Deviled Eggs; Cracker-Crust Pizza; and more. There are many recipes for different types of pizza, and the recipe for Artichoke Fondue Dip is my next selection. The Spicy Beef Tartare, and the Sweet-And-Sour Potluck Meatballs are indeed inviting. I will leave updates as we try new recipes. Delightful, refreshing, and enjoyable. Highly recommended!

Great, fun, regional book. I grew up in Wisconsin, so these recipes are all nostalgic for me. My family loved the Butcher's Kraut. It's the sort of Meat Tornado that would warm Ron Swanson's heart. The Cracker-Crust Pizza is great, but keep your eye on it. The recipe calls for 15-18 minutes at 500. On a properly preheated pizza stone, ours were done in 6. The Old Fashioned Pounded Cheese with Walnuts and Port Syrup is fantastic. Yeah, those are pecans in my photo, but I'm a Cheesehead in Texas now. :) She includes UP Pasties (Upper Peninsula), Beer Cheese Soup, Fancy Meatloaf with Bacon and Mushrooms, Cream Potato Lefse, Ginger Aebleskivers, and a take on rhubarb that I've never heard of, but can't wait to try, Rhubarb Sangria.

This is the best cookbook I've ever bought. In fact, I've bought this 3 times now. The original book I bought, one to replace in when I accidentally left it somewhere.... and as a gift for my Dad (Who also loves it). The chocolate chip cookie recipe alone is worth the cost. Everyone I've made them for swear they're the best they've ever had. Fried onion dip was a huge hit with our friends too... And my Dad who is a huge beer cheese soup snob thinks this surpasses the best he'd ever had at a steakhouse 20 years ago that until now... he hasn't shut up about. I haven't made anything from this book that wasn't at minimum pretty darn good if not spectacular.

Amy Thielen has managed to rescue Midwestern cooking from canned biscuit and cream of whatever soup mushiness and returned the table to the kinds of food our grandmothers made. . .with love, and care, and fresh, basic ingredients. Thielen has a conversational, storytelling style that compels you to want to run to the store *right now* and pick up everything you need to survive with nothing but this book. In the few weeks since I've owned this cookbook I have learned why my pot roasts were always turning out so tough, I found a way to make the best onion dip ever without a powdery mix, and my 14 year old son made excellent chocolate chip cookies from scratch (And stocked our freezer with cookie dough as well). The recipes are wholesome, delicious, inspiring and healthful. Most will easily feed a family of 4-6, but since the aim in the Midwest is to be hospitable, most will stretch even farther with little effort. I may even get over my fear of baking pies. . .I'll keep you posted. Meanwhile this book is already gravy splattered and flour sprinkled and sits alongside my favorites. . . "The Joy of Cooking" and "The Good Housekeeping Illustrated Guide to Cooking". They are quickly getting edged out!

This is such a wonderful cookbook! And it is exactly as advertised: new midwestern cooking. The ingredients are not overly complicated, but there is something familiar, yet unique, about all of the recipes. Perfect examples: Classic Pot Roast with Pistachio Salt and Baked Chicken with Porcini Spice Rub. While I am not officially a midwesterner (east coaster here), my parents are from Ohio and I have family in Michigan. So when I was having trouble deciding what to get my aunt and her husband for Christmas, I remembered this cookbook. The chapter on lake fish sold me. While the ingredients in most chapters are accessible throughout the country, the book's inclusion of lake fish demonstrated to me that this is a book that is serious about midwestern cooking. When my aunt's husband opened the book and saw a recipe for walleye, he was over the moon. Overall, this would be a great addition to any cookbook collection, but especially for someone living in the midwest.

I have been watching Heartland Table on tv and enjoying the program very much, so I knew I had to get the cookbook once it was available. I love Amy's style, her down-to-earth manner, her unpretentious cooking, and how she stays true to her roots. As I read the book, I am earmarking recipes to try. I grew up in the South, and have spent the last dozen years on the west coast, so the cooking habits of the heartland are a bit new to me. And that, to me, is the real attraction here...it isn't the same old thing you've been exposed to before. There are dishes I've never heard of, much less tried. But there are also new takes on familiar foods, as well. The book is well written and has beautiful photos. I highly recommend.

Lots of comfort food recipes in between anecdotes about growing up in the rural midwest. A number of old favorites (chocolate chip cookies) with new twists (add instant coffee). Would be a good gift for someone who wants to read the stories and look at the pictures, but not necessarily a great cookbook.

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