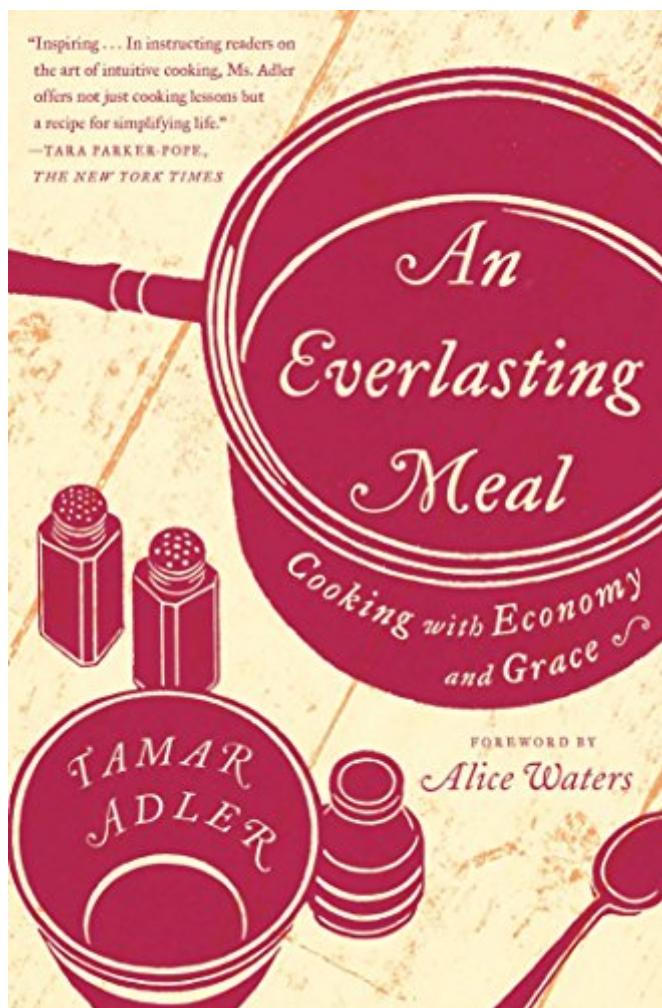


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An Everlasting Meal: Cooking With Economy And Grace



Synopsis

Reviving the inspiring message of M. F. K. Fisher's How to Cook a Wolf • written in 1942 during wartime shortages • An Everlasting Meal shows that cooking is the path to better eating. Through the insightful essays in An Everlasting Meal, Tamar Adler issues a rallying cry to home cooks. In chapters about boiling water, cooking eggs and beans, and summoning respectable meals from empty cupboards, Tamar weaves philosophy and instruction into approachable lessons on instinctive cooking. Tamar shows how to make the most of everything you buy, demonstrating what the world's great chefs know: that great meals rely on the bones and peels and ends of meals before them. She explains how to smarten up simple food and gives advice for fixing dishes gone awry. She recommends turning to neglected onions, celery, and potatoes for inexpensive meals that taste full of fresh vegetables, and cooking meat and fish resourcefully. By wresting cooking from doctrine and doldrums, Tamar encourages readers to begin from wherever they are, with whatever they have. An Everlasting Meal is elegant testimony to the value of cooking and an empowering, indispensable tool for eaters today.

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Customer Reviews

I read a lot but don't often write reviews for books, much less cookbooks. However, I really must write a review for *An Everlasting Meal* because it literally changed my life (in a week!). I am the child of the typical baby-boomer working mother who was too busy to cook, yet too poor to buy anything good -- my childhood was all economy, no grace. After marrying, I became a self-taught cook, learning from those Food Network shows and glossy paged celebrity chef cookbooks. While I am grateful for the techniques I have learned, I have felt the past few years my cooking has suffered from all grace and no economy. This has led to the problem of cooking burnout, and spoiled (lovely, organic) groceries, and way too much Thai takeout. With 3 growing kids, less time to grocery shop, and huge food bills, I needed a change of thinking AND doing. This book has provided that! Tonight I had a few (lovely, organic) chicken breasts in the fridge that were getting perilously close to the date. As it is the end of the weekend, I haven't shopped in days and I don't have the ingredients to make any of my glossy paged cookbook recipes. There was some stuff in the fridge, yet I would have thought "nothing to make". Thanks to Tamar Adler, I pulled out my trusty pot, boiled some very salty water and starting by boiling the chicken (who does that???) with a handful of Tuscan spice blend. Then I sauteed a diced onion with some leftover mushrooms (that also would have gone bad), chopped celery ends my kids didn't eat from their Ants on a Log, then made a little roux. I created a sauce with a couple of cups of the broth from the chicken breasts and a cup of milk and random cheese bits. Then I tossed some random leftover cooked veggies and the diced chicken breasts in my lovely mushroom sauce. I also found some too-stale-for-salad croutons in the pantry, so I threw them in the rest of my seasoned broth, making a kind of stuffing, and put it on top of my mushroom saucey chicken concoction and baked for a few minutes. My family declared this makeshift casserole the best thing ever. And there was enough to put another one in the freezer, so I have solved "what's for dinner" twice, never having touched a single recipe. Everything except the chicken, onion, and cup of milk was what Tamar calls "ends", most of which would likely have been in the garbage. If this sounds like the sort of thing that regularly happens at your house, then you probably don't need this book. If kitchen economy and/or grace are sorely lacking in your home, you will probably save the price of this book in one meal. I did read the Kindle version, which I normally wouldn't do with a cookbook. However, this book is prose, not glossy photos, and meant to be read in order, so Kindle works great.

If you love books at all, in any way, then I am sure that you can bring to mind almost immediately a list of books that you keep constantly updated in your head which you happened upon through

unlikely circumstances, but which you found in very short order, changed your life in unexpected ways. For myself, that list is rather eclectic, and perhaps to some, somewhat esoteric--it includes: "The Elements of Typographic Design", by Robert Bringhurst; "Woodcraft and Camping", by Horace Kephart; "Elegance", by Geneviève Antoine Dariaux; "Maiden Voyage", by Tania Aebi; "Progress and Poverty", by Henry George; and now, "An Everlasting Meal", by Tamar Adler. These are the books that you keep on a separate shelf, the ones you would grab in the event of an unexpected evacuation, the ones you constantly think of gifting to your benighted friends because you cannot bear the thought of them living one more day without the revelation that has made your former life seem dull and distant by comparison. I thought I knew a lot about food and cooking. Food is never far from my mind, and on a daily basis, I am the primary cook for a three generations deep family of six with widely varied tastes and nutritional requirements. I learned to provide for myself and others in the kitchens of my great-grandmother, grandmother, and mother, from my father, who brought the traditions of his homeland, the Philippines, and from my brother, the professional cook, as well as the cauldron of necessity that is poverty, of the usual sort as well as that enforced by the demands of having to carry not only one's entire kitchen upon their back, but also their larder, as you might have guessed by my mention of Horace Kephart's classic, above. Among my friends number gourmands, foodies, gastronomes, food bloggers, food magazine columnists, and cookbook authors, and I myself have a growing collection of my own developed recipes which I am gradually turning into something of a cookbook for public consumption. I thought I knew a lot about writing. I am a lifelong writer of songs, poetry, and commentary on diverse subjects, an avid reader, and again, personal friend to authors who names you would recognise if I were to drop them unnecessarily here. Yet, within only a few chapters of opening Tamar Adler's book, I found myself overwhelmed with the sense that the universe was both a much larger, and simultaneously smaller, place than I had ever dreamed, both more expansive and more simple than my perceptions had previously grasped. "An Everlasting Meal" is a book which has me reaching for all my social networking resources practically every other page, so replete is it with quoteworthy material and distilled insights that will startle you to think that you'd never considered them before, especially if your culinary milieu is garnered primarily from modern culture, with its emphasis on the freshest and choicest of everything and the finest in kitchenwares, all delivered to us by way of a profligate expenditure of our dwindling energy resources. I find within this book validation, recognition, kinship, and more than a little laughter; Tamar's well-stained casserole would find its sister in my kitchen, as would the glass roasting pans she has had since college--mine are of similar vintage, and if you have heard what's happened to Pyrex these days, you know that the old ones are the good ones. I

will forevermore make certain to have at least one extra good wooden spoon in my stash for throwing at an opportune moment. One never knows who might be passing by! I will not, in this review, give you a thorough run-down of what the book is, as others have already done that job, so you will know that this is not a cookbook, *per se*, nor is it a mere culinary memoir. It is both of those, and more. It is abstract, in a way, mystical, even, and above all imbued with an intimacy with its subject that simply cannot be feigned. "An Everlasting Meal" will, soon after you begin its inspection, have you thinking in new ways about both what goes into your kitchen and your meals, and what comes out of them, about how you might change your meals, and how they might change you. I honestly can think of no higher praise for a cookbook, if this book can properly be called such a thing, than that. I will make no bones of it--buy this book. Years ago, I developed a little saying which I often trot out with a hearty wink when people question why it is that in this era of convenience and abundance, my kitchen and its products are so central to my life: "There are two things I will not compromise in my life: things I put on my body, and things I put in my body, and you may take that however you like." If that proverb of mine resounds with you, this book is definitely for you. If it does not, buy the book anyway, and by the time you are halfway through it, I guarantee you, if you care at all about what and how you eat, it will.

This book is a lovely affirmation of my own cooking style, and a delicious read to boot! I grew up choking down food that the dog turned her nose up at, because my poor mother had never been taught how to cook and was forced to leave half the ingredients out of everything she cooked in order to satisfy my picky father, whose list of things he wouldn't eat was longer than most dictionaries. The upside to that is that I learned the CRITICAL importance of both good cooking technique, and being open to new things. When I began cooking for myself, and then for my husband and growing family, I gradually shifted from nervously cooking by other people's recipes to buying whatever was fresh, appealing, and a good deal, and putting my own dishes together. It's surprisingly easy, and a whole lot of fun. All you need is knowledge of basic cooking techniques, and taste buds. An Everlasting Meal is a paean of praise for simple, wholesome, natural food cooked lovingly and well, and if you want to learn quickly what took me several years on my own, buy this book and revel in a whole new way of relating to food. Never again will you stand in front of the fridge dithering over what on earth you're going to make tonight out of that odd jumble of pre-grocery shopping day odds and ends. This book empowers the average person who thought s/he couldn't cook to whip out sumptuous, delicious meals, seemingly out of thin air. Then you too can hear the most fabulous words ever heard coming from small children who are eating

vegetables.."I YUV dis, Mommy. Iss SO good".

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