



Alton Brown's Gear for Your Kitchen

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Alton Brown has smoked a salmon in a cardboard box, roasted a prime rib in a terracotta flower pot, cooked onion soup in an electric skillet, used a C-clamp as a nutcracker, and a binder clip to hold a probe thermometer in place. While his machinations may border on the Rube Goldberg-esque, it is among Brown's missions to present the best - and often the simplest - tool to get the job done. Following an introduction that discusses a little bit of kitchen history and some advice on room layout and organization, the book is divided into 9 chapters: Big Things with Plugs, Pots and Pans, Sharp Things, The Tool Box, Small Things with Plugs, Storage and Containment, It Came From the Hardware Store, Surfaces, and Safety and Sanitation.

Alton Brown's Gear for Your Kitchen Details

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From Reader Review Alton Brown's Gear for Your Kitchen for online ebook

Marcella says

A great read for stocking the kitchen with the right tools. Provides an easy to read guide of the materials that make up your kitchen tools and which situations they work best. Also some good cheats on kitchen tools from the hardware store.

Mixed in with the tool descriptions and usages are the short history of common kitchen items (aluminum foil anyone?) and recipes.

Definitely recommend for any level of home cook! I will prepare better meals for this.

Robyn says

I read straight through, even though I'm not presently stocking a kitchen or trying to reduce clutter in mine. The information is extensive and comprehensive. I enjoy Alton's "voice" and it's clear he knows of what he speaks. I'd say not worth owning, but definitely worth having available via library or a friend for when it's needed. The problem is that newlyweds and those striking out on their own (freshly graduated, freshly divorced, etc) will use this intensively for a short time, then not again for years. When they do need it again, it'll be the same way those of us with established kitchens do: "I need to replace this single item, what's the best way for me to go?" That usage is not worth a \$27.50 cover price, especially as the kitchen tool market changes over time.

I'd say this book is about 60% science and facts that lead the reader to a good purchase, and 40% opinion. Springform pans are an example. Alton says: "has a more lame-brained device ever been developed? No, says I. They leak, they warp, they stick, they stink. And that is all I have to say about springform pans." Well, he's obviously entitled to his opinion, and I don't doubt he's had problems with them. But the thing is...none of the springform pans I've owned or used have ever leaked, warped, stuck, or stunk. I've asked several friends and family members, same response. I own a full-size and two minis that I've been cooking with for about 15 years, no problems. I've also used my mom's, which is probably about as old as I am, and again, never a single problem. To completely dismiss this tool when it's a pan that can be used for more than just cheesecake (I use it for all sorts of dishes, several kinds of cakes and several non-baking applications) is short-sighted. Another example of 40% opinion is knives. Alton shares that he loves the 10 inch Shun chef's knife, and gives reasons why. Other companies are mentioned but barely (Global has a steel handle, that could conceivably be slippery. Henckels owns a patent on a phrase. Messer and Wusthof use a certain edge on their Santoku, etc.). Nearly every knife he photographed is a Shun. But he never mentions that Shun pays him. Shun actually sells a series of "Alton Brown knives". Frankly, I think that sort of thing should be mentioned, considering how often in all his books he says "and no, they don't pay me to say that."

Overall, the information is useful and a good starting place for doing more research. The danger in this book lies in consumers who think that the Alton Brown way, or the Good Eats way, is THE way, and who will buy what he suggests because he suggests it, without taking anything else into account. Shun knives, for example, are high-class knives, expensive, and in some hands very comfortable. But hundreds of reviews report that within the first weeks or even days of use on an end-cut wooden cutting board to chop simple

vegetables, bits of the blade chip off and disappear, presumably into the food being chopped. It seems that Shun is having some (hopefully temporary) manufacturing problems. People who read only this book and don't search out other sources of information will never know about this problem. Use the book as a starting place, not as a bible.

Lisa says

I have to evaluate my kitchen using this method.

Lance says

After trying for about a year to seriously learn how to cook by reading Joy of Cooking and McGee's On Food and Cooking, I started to get really discouraged and was considering committing suicide in a MacDonalds by eating BigMac Meals 'til I expired.

I realized that my knowledge was so rudimentary that even such celebrated tomes as those aforementioned could not save me from my fast-food induced demise. While I could understand the science, when it came to actually doing the cooking, I didn't know what most of the terms meant, and they raised some dizzying questions. Was Panna Cotta the color of my cast-iron frying pan? Was julienne really as pretty as she sounded? Is prosciutto illegal and was rosemary doing it? I certainly hoped not. No, I needed to take a step back, and learn something even more basic before I could improve my cooking, and before I could cook, I had to know what to cook with.

Enter Alton Brown to save the day! I'd watched a few cooking shows on The Food Network, but Good Eats was the only one that catered to the full-blown idjit like me. His book, Gear for Your Kitchen was the perfect start to my self-imposed remedial cooking course. It comes complete with recipes. I do the flower-pot chicken, but only when nobody's looking.

Crystal says

This is such a cool book. Alton Brown, one of my favorite food personalities, talks about the insides and outsides of every piece of cooking gear imaginable. He gives fairly unbiased pros and cons to each piece, and talks about the science behind utensils, cookware, and appliances. For example, he has a very straight forward explanation of the differences between cookware materials: stainless steel, copper, aluminum, cast iron, teflon, etc.

A great reference for anyone starting a new kitchen gadget collection, or looking to add to (or take away from) their current collection. Includes recipes with instructions on how to use some gadgets, as well as a good dose of author Brown's witty banter.

Amy "the book-bat" says

I read this book over a period of a couple months, a little bit at a time. I don't think it is really a book that most people would want to sit and read straight through. It is really more of a reference book for those

wanting to upgrade/remodel/refresh their kitchen. I like how Alton Brown gave some science behind why certain things work better in certain situations and also how he said that while he may prefer one brand of (discussed item) over others and why, that he also told about other brands to give a more balanced review. I never knew there were so many kinds of coffee makers or thermometers or any number of various other kitchen tools. I am glad that they were each described and their functions explained in case the reader wasn't familiar. I also thought the "other uses" for some of the items were very creative and I want to try some of them out... like cooking/smoking a chicken in a flower pot. I guess this book awakened my inner kitchen geek and I want to try some of the different techniques for myself since Brown gave such detailed instructions. The book also includes some recipes that go along with the tool being discussed at the time. Some sound pretty good and maybe I'll try them sometime.

Lenora Good says

OK, I admit it, I'm a Good Eats Junky. And any man who has a pet iguana has my heart!

If you've been around a kitchen for any length of time, a lot of this is old hat, but it's presented in a lighthearted manner, and is a good refresher. I think the bestest part is in the Introduction when he explains how to de-clutter the kitchen. And keep it de-cluttered.

If you're new to a kitchen, this is a great book to help you get set up properly, and for the least amount of money. Expensive is not always best. And his idea to shop at your local restaurant supply is wonderful. I've been shopping at mine for years. Restaurant quality at a price I can afford. What's not to like?

Another reason Alton Brown has my heart and undying love is that he hates items that are uni-taskers. He wants multi-taskers that can do several jobs. No exceptions! Well, maybe one. He likes frenched green beans, as does Spike, his pet iguana, so he has a frencher. I don't like green beans, frenched or otherwise, and I do not and will not have a bean frencher. But I may get a cigar cutter.

At times, I wondered if he was in my kitchen. He knew I had a drawer full of old knives passed down from grandparents to parents to me. I know have decent ones, and the right sizes and shapes for the job.

Do you buy some of your kitchen supplies from the hardware store? The tobacco shop? Why not? Brown gives a lot of recommendations regarding products. I strongly recommend you check the reviews before buying specific brands he recommends. The book was published in 2008—what may have been high quality then may no longer have that same quality.

I think this book is perfect for anyone who is starting out on their own, moving to their first apartment, their first kitchen. I know it's perfect for anyone who has been collecting gadgets for years. As well as old knives. Besides, it's just a lot of fun to read!

Dani Shuping says

I bought this book just after I started my first professional job and had a kitchen of my very own to stock. And like many I had no idea what the heck to buy! or why I should buy it or anything else. Trust Alton to

save my sanity. Alton doesn't tell you what brands or models to buy (he even suggests that you look at something like Consumer Reports for that.) No what Alton does is walk you through what types of things you might want in your kitchen, why you might want them, and what types of things you should look for in the products--just like he does on his show.

Each chapter is broken down into the various types of things (small appliances, pots, knives, etc) and Alton begins with what types of the items he has in his kitchen along with what he would save if there was a fire (in other words what he thinks is really necessary.) He puts it in simple easy to understand language of what to look for (what type of metal should it be made out of and why; what types of options it should have; etc), while sharing his own experiences with what he has and why he has it along the way.

This book still sits on my book shelf and when I start thinking about a new piece of kitchen equipment that I need, whether or a pot or an appliance, I pick up this book and get some ideas of what the heck to look for. I highly recommend this book for anyone starting out on their own or just looking at upgrading their kitchen.

Daniel says

Well, I just finished the book, I've never seen the show, and I don't have cable or regular TV. I will say this is a book worth owning, if you love to cook. This is also the book that should be a part of everyone's kitchen.

Claire says

I'd give this 3.5 if I could but...

If you are a serious cook, a couple registering soon, a Food Network junkie or a Good Eats fanatic (and I happen to fall into all of these categories) this book is for you.

If you haven't seen Alton's show on FN, his philosophy regarding kitchen equipment is simple is better and the only "unitasker" allowed in his kitchen is the fire extinguisher. He hates all kinds of gadgets that serve 1 or very little purposes.

His book walks through the different categories of kitchen equipment and talks about what you should have, what is nice to have and most importantly: what to look for in each item. Very helpful when selecting your kitchen equipment. It doesn't appear he was paid for any endorsements, as sometimes he recommends the cheaper simpler product (ex: immersion blender).

Even if you can't or don't want to spring for some of the more higher quality/expensive items he recommends, you can at least know what to look for and why its important so you can make your own choices and tradeoffs for your kitchen.

Kara says

A highly instructive tour of your kitchen but done in a funny, irreverent style.

Ash Ponders says

Wish I had read this before I owned a bunch of cooking stuff.

Paul says

Okay, I like Alton a bit too much, but I can honestly say that my cooking life is divided into before Alton and after Alton. This is a great guide on what you need in your kitchen. My dad always says the most important thing in any job is having the right tool. This helped me get the right tools.

Kaela Jochee says

I liked Alton Brown's no-nonsense writing style with a good dash of humor while breaking down the kitchen into easy to digest categories with great reasoning behind each decision on the equipment. Plus, it's also nice to know how often you need to bathe an iguana

Michael Haydel says

This is the book I turn to...actually, Alton Brown is who I turn to any time I want a no bullshit answer to just about any culinary question.

As for when I'm curious about a particular kitchen implement, this is the book. Anything else, he's probably covered in a Good Eats episode.

Fucking brilliant.

The Cyber Hermit says

I always appreciate Alton's thoughtful, thorough explanation on Good Eats and the general food knowledge he shares both in personal appearances and on Iron Chef America.

This is a good book for anyone looking to expand the potential for their kitchen. You don't have to take all his recommendations but he carefully outlines why he chooses what he does, what he likes and what he doesn't. It's a definite help in making an informed decision on what to add to your kitchen.

Anand Mandapati says

I wish this book were available when I learned how to cook, but, alas, it's only came out in 2008. I've been a huge fan of Alton Brown and Good Eats throughout the years and have tried hard to adhere to his multitasker strategy but this book really teaches you how to do that well. Amongst many things I've picked up from the book, he's taught me how to love cast iron, stoneware, and food processors. No matter how experienced you think you are in the kitchen, you'll always learn something from Alton.

Amanda says

This is a great book recommendation from Unclutterer. Alton guides you to a clutter free kitchen. This book is also full of great guidance for the right tools for you as a chef. I like the priority lists at the beginning of the chapters: What you need, what you need (really), what you would take to the island.

He's considerate of different budgets, which I totally appreciate. And he can tell you a dozen uses for pretty much any tool in your kitchen. I was constantly saying, "I would have NEVER thought of that!"

He's got great solutions to common kitchen problems, too. For example, jam two wine corks under the handle of your pot lids. Pot lids heat up but cork doesn't! There's also the one to make a huge grater out of a pizza box and a chair. But I can't visualize that one and I read the description a dozen times.

Kelly says

I like to cook. And when I get a chance I enjoy watching Alton Brown on the Food Network. I've learned a lot of interesting things by watching him. This book explained what a lot of basic cooking gear is used for, what are suitable replacements (the best multi-purpose tools), and other suggestions. Obviously, a normal cook can't afford to buy nor store everything you might find in a chef's kitchen. Alton did a good job of delineating between the useful and the unnecessary for a normal cook. I didn't have as much time as I would have liked to spend going over certain portions of the book - so for me it's worth checking out again as a reference manual - especially if I feel inclined to buy more kitchen products!!

Charles Grigsby says

Man, how is this ranked lower than his cookbooks?

Gear is *chock* full of knowledge of cooking equipment based on actual testing and experience all with a practical bias. Now a days with most chefs from food network telling you that the equipment you need is from the line of stuff that they are selling, the guy telling you what you should buy based on practical application is a gentleman and a scholar.

Although I do have to say that when I say practical, AB does cover just about anything that has ever been bought for use in a kitchen, and he does tell you what to look for when buying it. But he'll also tell you that you can do 99% of your cutting with a regular old chef's knife and cook anything you want aside from pasta in a cast iron skillet.

Anytime I start thinking about picking up a new kitchen item, I reach for this book.

