



[The Flavor Matrix: The Art and Science of Pairing Common Ingredients to Create Extraordinary Dishes](#) by James Briscione with Brooke Parkhurst copyright © 2018. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Interior photography © 2018 by Andrew Purcell.

Our Summary:

Unless you are a science geek, or someone that is fascinated by the science behind cooking, I suggest you open [The Flavor Matrix](#), flip through the sharp black and white pages filled with photographs and graphics, find a recipe that sounds intriguing and dive right in.

Most of the recipes you'll find in this [book](#) contain a handful of ingredients, and are created with kitchen processes you're familiar with. But the combination of ingredients is what makes [The Flavor Matrix](#) intriguing. The results? Almost indescribably delicious. As you savor the delicious food, take a closer look. What you'll find is a science textbook woven in between the recipes.

What you need to know:

Get it: [The Flavor Matrix: The Art and Science of Pairing Common Ingredients to Create Extraordinary Dishes](#) by James Briscione with Brooke Parkhurst copyright © 2018. Interior photography © 2018 by Andrew Purcell. (Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, March 6, 2018) (Hardcover \$30.00; [Amazon \\$22.05](#))

See it: 320 pages, black with recipes; white with flavor matrices and information. Color photographs of many of the finished recipes.

Make it: 58 recipes, most with variations and each with additional pairings and combinations; contains a well populated index; flavor matrices for each recipe and its main ingredient, with comprehensive chapters on the science behind how we taste.

Chef Donna's Review:

When it comes to cooking most approach it one of three ways: we follow a recipes, we recreate something that was passed down in our family, or we wing it with what we have on hand. But, each approach relies on our *food memories*. That's how we confidently combine flavors from what we have on hand, or trust the recipes we cook from. We intuitively know we've tasted those foods before and they make sense in our brain.

Introduce science into that mix, and suddenly we're left scratching our heads. We're no longer flipping through our mental rolodex of known flavors and ingredients. Instead, science relies on thousands of volatile compounds that make up a single ingredient, giving it its unique flavor. Use common denominators, and voila! A new set of flavor combinations that might seem odd together, but when combined through [The Flavor Matrix](#), kitchen magic happens.



For sure there is more information in this [book](#) than most will ever use. To be fair, you could say that about any cookbook. What *is* here in [The Flavor Matrix](#), however, is engaging enough to *make* you want to understand. You flip through the pages, read the recipe names and almost have to head into the kitchen to cook. *Spicy Fish Sauce Peanut Brittle*, for example. It sounds odd, but you can almost taste in your mind how this savory-sweet-crunchy combination works as a condiment. *Grilled Oysters with Watercress-Bacon Butter* is the same way.

Briscione captures the experiment that started at the Institute for Culinary Education with IBM's super computer Watson in everyday kitchen preparations. The odd-sounding flavor combinations are paired with classic proteins like chicken (*Chicken and Mushroom Burger with Strawberry "Ketchup"*), beef and pork. Vegetables and fruit (*Corn and Coconut Crème Brûlée*), nuts and herbs (*Crunchy Green Bean "Granola"*), are combined with ingredients that make you want to cook to experiment. And, the book is season-less. Even *Crab, Mango, Dill, and Poblano* salad works year round.

At some point, you can't help but be drawn in by the idea that all of the flavors we know have common denominators, volatile compounds, that we never think about. Lucky for us, James Briscione has, and has shown us what to do with that knowledge. Whether you're cooking a main dish, a dessert, or something in between from [The Flavor Matrix](#), you'll be grateful for the time he spent with IBM's Watson and then categorized everything we know as flavor or aroma.

Recipes to cook from [The Flavor Matrix: The Art and Science of Pairing Common Ingredients to Create Extraordinary Dishes](#) by James Briscione with Brooke Parkhurst copyright © 2018.

[Barley and Cauliflower "Risotto"](#)

[Chocolate Mousse with Crisp Beet Meringue](#)

Chef Donna's Note: Camomile Flowers are optional in this recipe. They can be found where loose teas are sold or online at [Amazon](#) or [The Spice and Tea Exchange](#)®

[Lemon Curd with Crunchy Olives](#)