



[*The Homemade Kitchen: Recipes for Cooking with Pleasure*](#) by Alana Chernila, Copyright © 2015. Published by Clarkson Potter/Publishers, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York. Photographs © 2015 by Jennifer May.

Our Summary:

Sometimes we just do the best we can. [Alana Chernila](#) applauds all of us for trying to be the best that we can be while in the kitchen. Cooking is a labor of life and love for her. Her honest and refreshing approach to cooking encourages and celebrates the home cook in all of us. In her follow-up to [The Homemade Pantry](#), Chernila shares her guiding principles that embolden and inspire her, and all of us, to feel good in the kitchen. “Do your best and then let go.” In her IACP Award nominated, [The Homemade Kitchen](#), this cookbook expresses the opposite of

perfection as it gives us the liberties to spread our wings, make mistakes, regroup and present remarkable dishes from scratch. This book is a marvelous treasure of recipes that allows all of us to be the best home cooks we can be!

What you need to know:

Get it: [The Homemade Kitchen: Recipes for Cooking with Pleasure](#) by Alana Chernila, Copyright © 2015. Photographs © 2015 by Jennifer May. (Published by Clarkson Potter/Publishers, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York, October 6, 2015) (Paperback \$24.99; [Amazon \\$19.60](#); [Kindle \\$11.99](#))

See it: 320 pages of well-organized and well-written recipes. It has strikingly rustic and modern photography of several finished recipes. An inviting Table of Contents that pulls you in immediately as well as an easy reference index. Included in this index is a section titled, “Thoughts on,” which answers to the many questions we have all had at one time or another.

Make it: Over 150 recipes with countless anecdotes, alternatives and valuable hints to empower you to cook at home and create delicious food. It even offers cheese making, fermentation, kefir, Kimchi and Tofu recipes.

Cherie’s Review:

[The Homemade Kitchen](#) emphasizes the importance of homemade cooking. Homemade is the opposite of perfection, it holds its’ makers personality, vision and uniqueness. We are all beginners when we step into the kitchen. “The space between what we want to do and what we know we can do- that’s where creativity and resourcefulness live.”

When I opened [The Homemade Kitchen](#) for the first time, I immediately felt drawn to the cooking style of author [Alana Chernila](#). I was empowered by what I already knew and the promise of what I was about to learn! I love learning new things and re-learning what I thought I had a handle on! Seeing things from another person’s point of view excites and invigorates me, and I think it will you, too.



In her opening chapter of [The Homemade Kitchen](#), “Be a Beginner,” she writes about cooking eggs and vegetables, making jam and pickles, roasting chicken, transforming milk and cooking grains. She gives us a basic step-by-step recipe for a no-fail piecrust that can be used for pies, tarts and quiche. Notes on using fresh herbs and of course how to make the perfect pasta. With these techniques under our belts, the sky is the limit!

I have a local community garden plot that I adore and spend a lot of my time tending to. I was thrilled with [The Homemade Kitchen’s](#) chapter on, “Put Your Hands in the Dirt.” I can so relate to that rush I feel when planning a garden in early March of each year. Planting greens and all those things that make for a delicious salad send my head spinning! I love the *Platter Salad* recipes that encourages the spontaneous use of everything and anything you have in the garden. Those delicious vegetables and greens that you just can’t make up your mind- which to use? “Use them all,” she says and make a beautiful platter! Cooked or raw, add a protein, some cheese and whatever salty bit of deliciousness you have in the fridge, her *Basic Vinaigrette* and ta-dah -simply put, you have the perfect *Platter Salad*!

Honestly, I have never given much thought to fermentation and the act and art that goes hand in hand with it. I take sourdough bread, chevre, kefir and feta for granted. [The Homemade Kitchen’s](#) chapter on, “Be Active,” gives us the recipes to make *Preserved Lemons* (glorious!), *Kefir* and a *Kefir Banana Cake*, and *Kimchi*! Who doesn’t remember the M*A*S*H episode, “Of Moose and Men,” where Frank Burns ran around the camp finding buried crocks of Kimchi that he thought were explosives set by the enemy? I am now all in on trying my hand at making *Kimchi* and using it in [Chernila’s](#) recipe, *Kimchi Breakfast Tata*. Don’t miss her exceptional recipes for *Feta Cheese* and *Greek Salad* as well. Worth every moment of her easy-to-follow directions to perfection!

You’ll continue to be intrigued by [The Homemade Kitchen](#) as you understand the importance of “Using our Scraps” and preventing waste. [Chernila](#) makes us better stewards of the environment as she instructs “Every time we use something we thought was trash, it feels like free food!” She adds that “quiet revolutions can add up!” But, she also offers tips on how to store vegetables and make food last longer that help keep your kitchen running smoothly. Her *Stuffed Tomatoes* recipe uses all of those August tomatoes and any stale sourdough or sliced bread you may have, into a delicious picnic or lunch dish.

[The Homemade Kitchen](#) uses Chernila’s life guiding principles in each chapter of this lovingly and smartly written cookbook. She encourages us in her chapter, “Be Helpful” to make dinner for friends when they are needing it most. Her *Easy Coq Au Vin with Buttermilk Spaetzle* is a crowd pleaser! In each of these titled chapters with delicious accompanying recipes, she wants us to “Invite People Over”, “Slow Down” and “Eat Outside.” My personal favorite is, “Don’t Be Afraid of Food,” where Chernila describes herself as “spending a fair amount of time living and eating alongside the fantasy of a future body.” “The enjoyment of food might just be the **nutrient** in itself, in fact, it might be the most important one of all.” This quote resonates with all of us and this chapter provides us with some amazingly delicious recipes. *The Ricotta Mousse Trick* is one that I have made and love!



Eating homemade is truly a labor of love. It brings us together, around the table with family and friends to celebrate life. [The Homemade Kitchen](#), encourages all of us to take the risks, enjoy the days and moments and live well. After all, we all try to do our best and as [Alana Chernila](#) says, “after that, then let go!” Start there and see what you are hungry for!

Recipes to cook from [The Homemade Kitchen: Recipes for Cooking with Pleasure](#). Copyright © 2015 by Alana Chernila. Photographs copyright © 2015 by Jennifer May. Reprinted with permission.

[Asparagus Carbonara](#)

[Minestrone](#)

[Muffins](#)