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**Our Summary:**

Put ingredients first! Ronna Welsh, chef and founder of the Purple Kale Kitchenworks, and author of [\*The Nimble Cook: New Strategies for Great Meals That Make the Most of Your Ingredients\*](#), puts ingredients before recipes and prioritizes personal life over strict meal plans. Her *nimble* three-step approach to making a meal begins first with *Ingredients-Ingredients* you want to eat! Step two offers you her favorite preparations for each ingredient or, *Starting Points*. Step three,

*Explorations*, builds upon step two and adds even more ideas to create delicious dishes. This cookbook sets aside traditional meal plans and empowers your sense of imagination and creativity when you step into your kitchen. “Seeing ingredients for their fullest potential” allows us to put *ingredients*, not recipes, first. This, as Ronna Welsh has described, is simply good cooking.

**What you need to know:**

**Get it:** [\*The Nimble Cook: New Strategies for Great Meals That Make the Most of Your Ingredients\*](#).

Copyright © 2019 by Ronna Welsh. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, April 2, 2019 Hardcover \$30.00; ([Powell's Books \\$30.00](#)) (Amazon \$19.49; Kindle \$16.99).

**See it:** 400 pages of techniques, advice and recipes that will serve as a guide to improve your way of cooking today. These strategies are well-organized into chapters that highlight ingredients that include *Aromatics; Leaves, Heads and Bulbs; Apples, Oranges, and Lemons; Fish and Shellfish, etc.* Each chapter gives basic and impressive ways to prepare and store ingredients, advocating innovation with less waste. There are full-color illustrations and flow charts throughout the cookbook that offer unending possibilities for various ingredients.

**Make it:** More than 400 recipes and ideas that make the most of your ingredients, skills and time. It is the perfect teaching guide to understanding the versatility of ingredients and how to incorporate them with confidence into any dish you create.

**Cherie's Review:**

[\*The Nimble Cook: New Strategies for Great Meals That Make the Most of Your Ingredients\*](#) teaches the home cook how to get the most from your ingredients *and* your efforts in the kitchen. Offering tips on preparing foods when you're pressed for time, or short on ideas, author Ronna Welsh encourages us to think outside of the box when it comes to ingredients. *The Herb Tank*, for example, provides ideas on simple ways to preserve fresh herbs to keep them flavorful and crisp, and always in site ready to use. From here, her first of three steps, the *Starting Point*, your herbs are ready for her recipes, like *Many-Herb Salad* or *Scallion-Herb Salad*.



[The Nimble Cook](#) continues to guide us with an ingredient-first approach, in a discussion about the wastefulness of meal planning. Welsh suggests that while having a recipe in mind ahead of time may provide direction and a place to start, it doesn't account for the food we have on hand, the amount of time we have to prepare it, and really, what we are hungry for at that moment. In *The Celery Sort*, Welsh expands your perspective on the many uses of celery, and so many other ingredients that we tend to overlook and waste. Recipes for *Creamy Braised Celery*, *Celery Gratin*, and *Creamy Braised Celery Soup* use this somewhat timid vegetable in many wonderful ways. By using all parts of the celery, including the ends for a *Quick Spring Stock* or the leaves for *Celery Syrup* in a delicious *Celery Sour* cocktail, her root-to-stalk approach is apparent.

The ingredients used most often in [The Nimble Cook](#) are highlighted in a section called *Sustaining Your New Way of Cooking*. Here you learn the value in Welsh's *Starting Points* and how to easily put meals together. A personalized pantry, she suggests, is the key to your efficiency in the kitchen. She suggests starting with an excellent olive oil, coarse kosher salt, and flaky sea salt. Building on that she offers recipes like *Crunchy Pickled Watermelon Rinds* that uses the outer green skins of the watermelon and pickles them to taste like a "forever-crisp" pickle. By adding red wine vinegar, fresh parsley, and fresh garlic to her pantry staples, the pickled rinds can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 4 months or used in her recipe for *Pickled Watermelon Rind Salad with Salami and Feta*.

[The Nimble Cook](#) encourages us to shop for ingredients we want to eat. Not just for a specific dish, but with versatility in mind. The chapter on *Meat*, incorporates Welsh's three-step cooking plan seamlessly. Beef, Pork, and Lamb are the star ingredients for her *Starting Points* and ideas in *Explorations*. From *Wine-Braised Short Ribs*, *Pork Loin with Grapefruit Salsa*, to *Flatbread with Lamb Shanks, Pine Nuts, and Mint*, these recipes showcase fabulous ingredients and versatility in meal planning and preparation.

[The Nimble Cook](#) assists the home cook in getting the most from ingredients and time spent in the kitchen. With its nimble three-step approach to cooking, we are provided the tools to cook terrific, flavorful food and realizing the full potential in all ingredients. For the nimble cook, a great meal doesn't have to be any more than an assembly of fresh, delicious things to eat. The idea of simple-to-assemble plates of food for all to share tied together with little more than good conversation, makes it easy for us to step confidently into the kitchen and cook. We, at [Now That's a Mouthful](#), enthusiastically agree!

**Recipes to cook from [The Nimble Cook: New Strategies for Great Meals That Make the Most of Your Ingredients](#).** Copyright © 2019 by Ronna Welsh. Reprinted with permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.

[Glazed Seared Brussels Sprouts with Balsamic Onion Jam Glaze](#)

[Braised Fennel Antipasto](#)

[Seared Scallops with Ginger and Braised Parsnips \(White Wine and Cumin\)](#)