



[Cooking for Good Times](#)* by Paul Kahan, copyright © 2019. Photographs copyright © 2019 Peden + Munk. Published by Lorena Jones Books, a division of Penguin Random House, LLC.

Our Summary:

We all dream about walking into our kitchen and just whipping up a meal. Low-stress cooking, no planning or fretting. It may be a dream, but Chicago's Chef Paul Kahan in his new book [Cooking for Good Times Super Delicious, Super Simple](#) attempts to give us exactly that. By highlighting 12 cooking techniques throughout the book, he mixes and matches those skills so kitchen basics feel new again. With each core master recipe, Kahan gives you wine suggestions for pairing or beer styles to match the food, and along the way wraps in more than 125 full color photographs of the food and people enjoying the good times that inevitably come from gathering around a table of good food. This book really does give you effortless cooking. And in a

world where pretense rules the day, it's nice to be able to get away from that in your kitchen and just cook for the simple pleasure of super delicious food.

What you need to know:

Get it: [Cooking for Good Times](#) by Paul Kahan, copyright © 2019. Published by Lorena Jones Books, a division of Penguin Random House, LLC, October 15, 2019 Hardcover \$35.00 ([Amazon \\$31.50](#) (pre-release); [Kindle \\$16.99](#))*

See it: 288 pages divided into 12 core cooking techniques with up to 8 customizations on each technique. 125 full-color photographs of the food, ingredients, and Kahan and friends enjoying good times. The main index is solid and friendly. There is no separate recipe index, but the chapter headings give you a good idea of the primary ingredient or technique the recipes employ.

Make it: No recipe count given; core cooking techniques lead each of the 12 chapters with a “here’s how” section detailing things like roasting and marinating root vegetables, roasting a chicken and making pizza dough. While there are definite techniques to learn, the other recipes in the chapter allow for variations and deviations to suit your style.

Chef Donna’s Review:

Paul Kahan in [Cooking for Good Times Super Delicious, Super Simple](#) offers up recipes and techniques for cooking food in its purest and often simplest form. Recipes are easy, even if they stray from what you think is a classic. But chef-author Kahan says, “nothing is off limits.” And while the book happily takes detours to make cooking simple and pure for the home cook, the core recipes and techniques are sometimes fussy and tedious. That’s because Kahan believes, in some cases, there is a precise way to cook. But after that, his recipes are effortless and fair game for personalization.

Fear not. You won’t need to learn something at the outset of each chapter! There’s plenty to cook using familiar methods in chapters like, *Make Some Food To Eat While You Cook*, or *Buy Some Greens*. Nothing is overworked, even when you are learning to *Make Some Pizza Dough* or *Braise a Pork Shoulder*. The food in [Cooking for Good Times](#) is extremely friendly for anyone who wants to cook. Try making *Salumi or Sausage with Pickled Cherries, Fennel, and Hard Cheese* to change up what you’d normally set out for a charcuterie

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board. Learn how to make the classic *Panzanella* bread salad and then create variations like *Panzanella with Hearty Greens, Honey-Roasted Squash, and Pear* or *Nicoise-style Panzanella with Tomatoes, Green Beans, Olives, and Anchovies*.

Kahan, besides being a great chef, is a great read, too. You may be tempted to skip the introduction in [Cooking for Good Times](#), but don't. You'll feel like a friend he's invited to his table to share his ideas about cooking. Like, it's okay to be successful with a small repertoire of can't miss dishes, especially when you can make small changes to them. Or, make as much as possible in advance, so you too can enjoy the meal. You'll see there's no order to how a meal should be served. Or, for that matter, that there's a particular kind of wine you need to serve, though Kahan happily points you in the right direction if you're interested.

Simplicity rules the day in [Cooking for Good Times](#) but don't think that means you sacrifice flavor. Ingredients and flavor combinations *feel* complex, but they're not. Great food is always a combination of great component parts, which Kahan delivers to you in spades. His *Greens with Lemony Yogurt Vinaigrette, Radishes, Mint and Seed Crackers* features singular ingredients mixed with an easy-to-make yogurt vinaigrette. Learning to roast a chicken isn't hard at all, and he explains the importance of stuffing the chicken with aromatics, and how to truss your bird for proper roasting. What becomes possible after that includes meals like *Roast Chicken with Celery Root, Apples, and Lydia's Famous Buttermilk Dressing* or *Roasted Chicken with Smashed and Crisped Potatoes and Green Sauce* (a play on an herb garlic sauce).

It's fair to say you won't just open to a page in [Cooking for Good Times](#) and rock out the recipe. However, if you plan even just one day ahead you'll find that a quick trip to the grocery store, along with pantry staples, affords you the opportunity to make just about any of these dishes while you spend time in the kitchen talking, imbibing, and catching up with the people that you care enough to feed. The savvy home cook will see opportunities to short-cut and substitute quality prepared foods, and invest the few minutes to make the dressings, sides or sauces that take the core recipes to the next level.

In a world filled with pretense, you'll welcome the chance to regain control and cook food that you'll be confident to serve to whoever is around your table. Even if it's just you, the joy that comes from a super delicious, super simple meal will affirm that you are a solid, capable home cook. And that makes any day worth sharing around a table and celebrating good times.

Recipes to cook from [Cooking for Good Times](#) by Paul Kahan, copyright © 2019. Photographs copyright © 2019 Peden + Munk. Published by Lorena Jones Books, a division of Penguin Random House, LLC.

[Charred Market Peppers with Pickled Feta](#)

[Roasted and Marinated Roots with Smoky Yogurt, Crisp Lentils, and Dill Vinaigrette](#)

[Grains with Roasted Cauliflower, Black Olives and Oranges](#)

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