

Sunday, November 29, 2009

## Holiday gift guide: Food and drink

By John McMurtrie

**La Cucina: The Regional Cooking of Italy** (Rizzoli; 928 pages; \$45). More than 2,000 recipes from all over Italy, collected a half century ago by cultural preservationists and published here for the first time in English. The recipes are neatly organized and identified by region - there are dozens of recipes just for anchovies (yes, that is a good thing). Every home should have a copy.

**Gourmet Today**, edited by Ruth Reichl (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; 1,024 pages; \$40). The magazine may no longer exist, but let's be grateful for this expanded edition of a contemporary classic.

**Ad Hoc at Home: Family-Style Recipes**, by Thomas Keller (Artisan; 368 pages; \$50). Can't set aside a week to attempt a French Laundry recipe? Here's the alternative.

**The Essential Cuisines of Mexico**, by Diana Kennedy (Potter; 525 pages; \$20 paperback). Revised, updated and (always nice) affordable.

**World Cheese Book**, edited by Juliet Harbutt (DK Publishing; 352 pages; \$25). A useful guide, with images, to more than 750 cheeses, from Ardsallagh (Ireland) to Zamorano (Spain).

**Been Doon So Long: A Randall Grahm Vinthology**, by Randall Grahm (UC Press; 318 pages; \$34.95). A highly imaginative romp through wine culture (complete with poems, song lyrics and wild wine labels) from the founder of Bonny Doon Vineyard.

**Slow: Life in a Tuscan Town**, by Douglas Gayeton (Welcome Books; 178 pages; \$50). Tuscany and its traditions come alive in this unpretentious and whimsical collection of photos and text by a Petaluma artist.

**Mix Shake Stir: Recipes from Danny Meyer's Acclaimed New York City Restaurants** (Little, Brown; 224 pages; \$29.99). The exquisite photography alone may inspire you to make your own \$20 cocktails.

**The Complete America's Test Kitchen TV Show Cookbook** (America's Test Kitchen; 646 pages; \$39.95). More than 650 recipes (yes, with tips) from the show's first decade.

**B. Smith Cooks Southern-Style, by Barbara Smith** (Scribner; 326 pages; \$35). A welcome approach to down-home fare (think less fat).

**Windows on the World Complete Wine Course**, by Kevin Zraly (Sterling; 338 pages; \$27.95). A handsome, updated 25th anniversary edition of Zraly's best-seller.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/11/29/RVE41AP7LR>.  
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