



# Kitchen confidence

**Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone — there's expert help at hand.**

It's hard to argue with a title proclaiming **It's Always About the Food** (HarperCollins, \$50). Of course being from the gals behind the Monday Morning Cooking Club, it's also about friendship, and collecting and sharing heirloom recipes. Their first book focused on family and the Jewish community in Sydney, the next went around Australia. This one has gone global and we're licking our lips with anticipation at the breadth of dishes, from heartwarming pea and lamb soup to a decadent frangipani cake. As always, the MMCC shares the stories of the people behind the recipes and they're just as inviting.

There could be few more enticing titles for this home cook, though, than **Citrus** (Hardie Grant Books, \$40). Like London-based author Catherine Phipps, I love the transformative powers of the humble lemon or a luscious lime — savoury or sweet, it works some mysterious magic, so long as you're not too heavy-handed. This gorgeous book also includes oranges, mandarins and other less-celebrated citrus. Preserved, grated, juiced, cooked, and just generally treated with respect, citrus is a deserving hero of so many wonderful dishes: mandarin creme caramel; lemon, mustard and rosemary potatoes; coconut, lime and lemongrass chicken salad; orange and ginger butter shortbread...

**The Really Quite Good British Cookbook** (Echo Publishing, \$50) might be a wink to the notion that there's nothing that great about British cooking. Edited by William Sitwell, this is actually more than quite good — it's a collection of recipes from some of the old country's celebrated chefs, including Jamie Oliver, Rick Stein, Nigella Lawson and Yotam Ottolenghi, as well as some young guns. Asked what they would cook for the people they love, they came back with a wonderful array of dishes. Nigella chose ham in Coca-cola (don't even consider using the diet variety) and a chocolate Guinness cake, while Rick shared veal,

mint and oregano meatballs in a rich tomato sauce. My favourite so far is Welsh food writer Elisabeth Luard's warm new potato salad with mint leaves and chives — simple and delicious.

For lovers of Indian cuisine, there are two new books on the shelf. If you're just looking for something yummy for dinner, I'd probably opt for Anjum Anand's **I Love India** (Hardie Grant Books, \$40) — it's packed with easy and enticing dishes from around the country, including charred, spiced sweet potato salad and Sindhi cardamom lamb. While Anjum shares plenty of tips from her travels around India, it's not as involved as Monisha Bharadwaj's heavy tome. Aptly named **The Indian Cookery Course** (Simon & Schuster, \$55), it takes you through the right equipment and planning, lessons in those all-important

spices and the basics of curries and pastes. Even rice, in all its myriad forms and methods, is given a chapter and there are masterclasses in everything from curry pastes to roti bread. This is for someone who really wants to get serious about sub-continent cooking.

Likewise, **Annie's Farmhouse Kitchen** (Hardie Grant Books, \$40) is for a cook who likes to push themselves a little. Beautifully illustrated by Robin Cowcher, Annie Smithers shares "seasonal menus with a French heart". While the chef, who has a little restaurant in country Victoria, says the recipes work fine as standalone dishes, she hopes to "give you the confidence to cook a well-balanced multi-course menu similar to those that grace my restaurant tables". She's planned them all out to make the process easier. Start with autumn (as the book does) and don't be afraid to make mistakes. As Annie says, she's made heaps. Happy cooking!

**Julie Hosking**



25 Mar 2017  
Weekend West, Perth

Section: West Weekend Magazine • Article type : News Item • Audience : 242,298  
Page: 21 • Printed Size: 357.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: WA • Country: Australia • Words: 608  
Item ID: 745227342

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