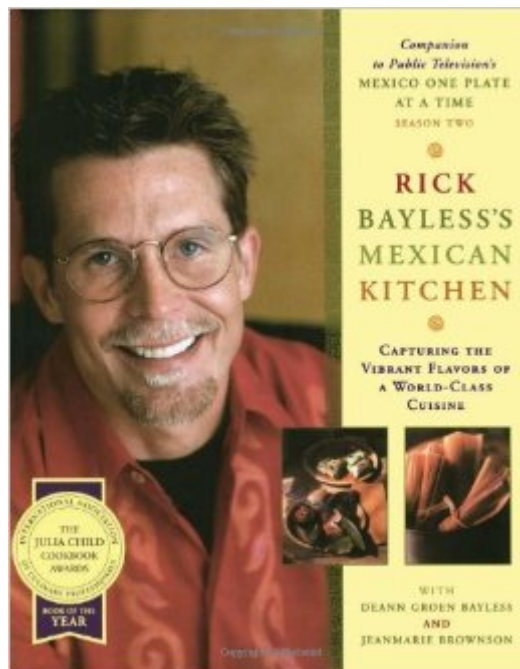


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Rick Bayless's Mexican Kitchen: Capturing The Vibrant Flavors Of A World-Class Cuisine



Synopsis

Bursting with bold, complex flavors, Mexican cooking has the kind of gusto we want in food today. Until now, American home cooks have had few authorities to translate the heart of this world-class cuisine to everyday cooking. In this book of more than 150 recipes, award-winning chef, author and teacher Rick Bayless provides the inspiration and guidance that home cooks have needed. With a blend of passion, patience, clarity and humor, he unerringly finds his way into the very soul of Mexican cuisine, from essential recipes and explorations of Mexico's many chiles to quick-to-prepare everyday dishes and pull-out-the-stops celebration fare. Bayless begins the journey by introducing us to the building blocks of Mexican cooking. With infectious enthusiasm and an entertaining voice, he outlines 16 essential preparations—deeply flavored tomato sauces and tangy tomatillo salsas, rich chile pastes and indispensable handmade tortillas. Fascinating cultural background and practical cooking tips help readers to understand these preparations and make them their own. Each recipe explains which steps can be completed in advance to make final preparation easier, and each provides a list of the dishes in later chapters that are built around these basics. And with each essential recipe, Bayless includes several "Simple Ideas from My American Home"—quick, familiar recipes with innovative Mexican accents, such as Baked Ham with Yucatecan Flavors, Spicy Chicken Salad, Ancho-Broiled Salmon and Very, Very Good Chili. Throughout, the intrepid Bayless brings chiles into focus, revealing that Mexican cooks use these pods for flavor, richness, color and, yes, sometimes for heat. He details the simple techniques for getting the best out of every chile—from the rich, smoky chipotle to the incendiary but fruity habanero. Then, in more than 135 recipes that follow, Bayless guides us through a wide range of richly flavored regional Mexican dishes, combining down-home appeal and convivial informality with simple culinary elegance. It's all here: starters like Classic Seviche Tostadas or Chorizo-Stuffed Ancho Chiles; soups like Slow-Simmered Fava Bean Soup or Rustic Ranch-Style Soup; casual tortilla-based preparations like Achiote-Roasted Pork Tacos or Street-Style Red Chile Enchiladas; vegetable delights like Smoky Braised Mexican Pumpkin, or Green Poblano Rice; even a whole chapter on classic fiesta food (from Oaxacan Black Mole with Braised Chicken, Smoky Peanut Mole with Grilled Quail and Great Big Tamal Roll with Chard with the incomparable Juchitan-Style Black Bean Tamales); and ending with a selection of luscious desserts like Modern Mexican Chocolate Flan with Kahlua and Yucatecan-Style Fresh Coconut Pie. To quickly expand your Mexican repertoire even further, each of these recipes is accompanied by suggestions for variations and improvisations. There is no greater authority on Mexican cooking than Rick Bayless, and no one can teach it better. In his skillful hands, the wonderful flavors of Mexico will enter your kitchen and

your daily cooking routine without losing any of their depth or timeless appeal.

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Customer Reviews

`Rick Bayless's Mexican Kitchen' is restaurateur / PBS show host Rick Bayless' second major book on Mexican cuisine in cooperation with his wife, Deann Groen Bayless, and the first with collaborator, JeanMarie Brownson. The primary point of view which distinguishes this book from both his earlier `Authentic Mexican' book and his later PBS tie-in, `Mexico, One Plate at a Time' is that it deconstructs major aspects of Mexican dishes by breaking them down into `Essential' recipes and recipes which use these essential preparations as an ingredient. This has a lot in common with Ming Tsai's technique in his latest book, `Simply Ming', with the difference that while many of Ming Tsai's preparations were of his own devising, Senor Bayless is presenting us with the fact that the Mexican cuisine by its very nature, lends itself to this `modularization'. Almost all of the essential recipes are sauces and salsas. As Rick explains, the notion of a salsa is much broader to the Mexican mind than it may be to us gringos looking at the notion from the outside.

Hats off to Bayless, this is one of the best cookbooks I have ever come across - regardless of culinary topic. He really does provide everything you would want in a cook book...he reveals the story behind the food with valuable insight, provides a good balance between finished dishes and understanding the raw materials and techniques, and he provides you with great sources for deeper research. It's interesting that I was hesitant about Bayless's book in the beginning because my only previous experience with him was watching a few episodes of his show. From what I saw, I thought

he spent way too much time on Antojitos...and that was definitely not what I was interested. See, I was born in Mexico City, and have dined on most of the regional cuisines of Mexico so what I craved were the incredible savory, complex dishes that I could not even dream of finding in California, where it is relatively easy to find authentic Mexican "junk" food. To that end, this book really delivers. I have successfully prepared the Barbacoa, utilized his method of simmering chicken straight in a rich sauce, his basic sauce recipes answered a few lingering questions that allowed me to perfect my own recipes. In addition, I am exclusively dry roasting garlic on a griddle, and rinsing chopped onions which has improved just about every dish I prepare. Finally, he has given me valuable insight for deeper research on Mexican cuisine...such as identifying a Mexican cookbook that is entirely devoted to Mexico's wild mushrooms & truffles. And those who don't think the foods he presents are traditional are completely wrong. If anything, he steers clear away from Contemporary trends in Mexican cuisine.

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