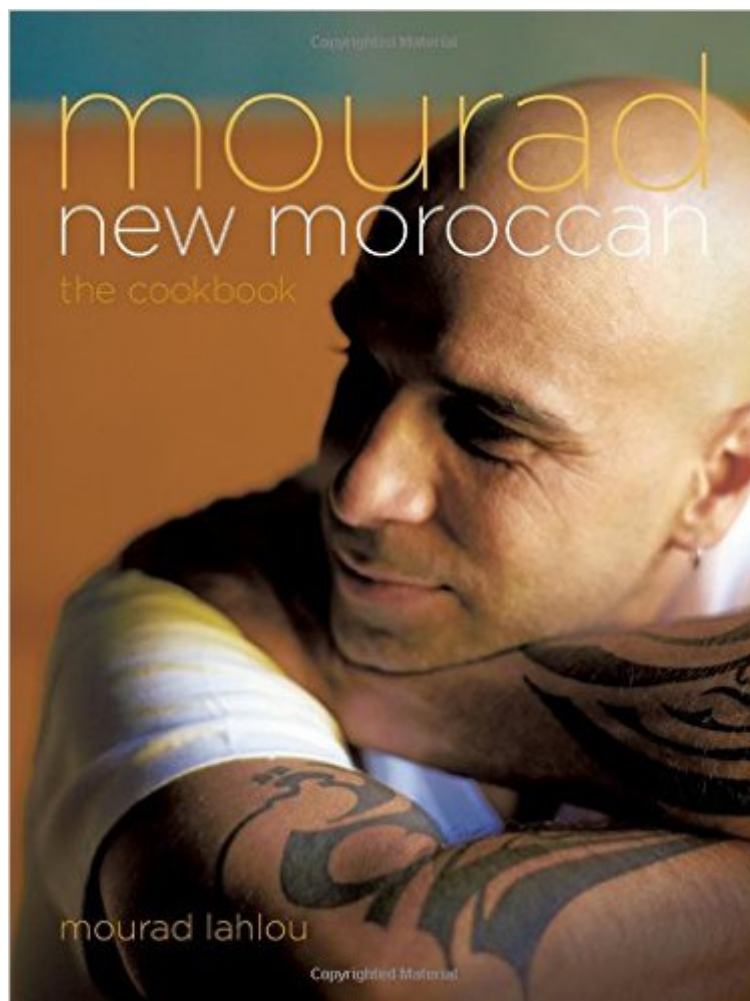


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Mourad: New Moroccan



Synopsis

A soulful chef creates his first masterpieceWhat Mourad Lahlou has developed over the last decade and a half at his Michelin-starred San Francisco restaurant is nothing less than a new, modern Moroccan cuisine, inspired by memories, steeped in colorful stories, and informed by the tireless exploration of his curious mind. His book is anything but a dutifully authentic documentation of Moroccan home cooking. Yes, the great classics are all here—the basteeya, the couscous, the preserved lemons, and much more. But Mourad adapts them in stunningly creative ways that take a Moroccan idea to a whole new place. The 100-plus recipes, lavishly illustrated with food and location photography, and a terrifically engaging text offer a rare blend of heat, heart, and palate.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mourad: New Moroccan is essential reading for the international cook who has moved beyond recipes, but wants to participate in a modern conversation about food, and channel the techniques and thought processes of one of our most gifted and visionary chefs. Today that conversation includes other self-taught-with-influences chefs like Heston Blumenthal, or Chad Robertson of the Tartine bakery. For me the first "conceptual" books in this vein were Tom Colicchio's "Think Like a Chef" and Paul Bertolli's "Cooking by Hand". Perhaps one recipe from Colicchio or Bertolli has made our regular rotation, but we haven't opened a can of tomatoes since Colicchio's book came out and we simplified and fixed his tomato conserve, to freeze each summer's crop. We grind our own flour for everything, ever since Bertolli's book came out and we simplified and fixed his fresh

pasta recipes. I expect a similarly profound influence from Lahlou's book. To be honest, I want to continue to make fairly traditional Moroccan dishes, but employing modern techniques and available ingredients. I don't need to convince restaurant diners to melt their credit cards over beautiful skyscraper plates, but the thinking that goes into these more formal dishes will be invaluable for executing the classics. As a rule I reject books about traditional cuisines that are too interpretative, including various other Moroccan tomes that I've seen, but Mourad: New Moroccan is a keeper. The first, biographical introduction is a riveting, tears and laughter affair, an account of a life growing up around food in his traditional family home in the Marrakesh medina. One comes to understand why he shaved his head on his grandfather's passing. (And yes, the book offers several opportunities to confirm this, but no matter.

I bought this book several months ago and browsed it when I got it. Lovely photos, introductions to the flavors of Moroccan food - such as Preserved Lemons, Ras al Hanous spice mix, Warqa, etc - which I anticipated. Reviewing the recipes, I noticed that Mr. Lahlou takes liberties with the traditions of Morocco, while still being respectful of the flavors, textures and vibrancy of what is perhaps my favourite cuisine. I put the book down and did not think about it again for some time. When I picked it up and read it in earnest, I am completely amazed at both the complexity and thought that is contained in the recipes. Each flavor leading to another, blending techniques of Morocco with the capacities of most (good to excellent) home cooks. Make no mistake: this is not a book for beginners. Many of the recipes require several steps in the preparation (making the spices, salting/marinating and resting meats overnight) or are quite straight-forward but have exceptionally complex accompaniments (Braised Beef Cheeks is quick enough to cook, but preparing the meat requires forethought of a day or so and the accompanying Carrot Jam takes 10 hours to complete). For those willing to invest the time, however, the rewards are exceptional. Multi-layered and multi-dimensional food with an incredible punch are within your grasp. Food that is beautiful and yet even more delicious. I find that many of the techniques and ideas that Mr. Lahlou has incorporated in the book are refinements of my already aggressive home-kitchen skills - and ones which I am glad to add to my skill set moving forward. I am grateful to have this book as an addition to my collection of Moroccan cooking. If you are seeking a compendium of traditional Moroccan recipes, you should look to Paula Wolfert.

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