



Ruhlman's Twenty: The Ideas and Techniques that Will Make You a Better Cook

Michael Ruhlman , Donna Turner Ruhlman (Photographer)

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Rare is the cookbook that redefines how we cook. And rare is the author who can do so with the ease and expertise of acclaimed writer and culinary authority Michael Ruhlman. *Twenty* distills Ruhlman's decades of cooking, writing, and working with the world's greatest chefs into twenty essential ideas from ingredients to processes to attitude that are guaranteed to make every cook more accomplished. Whether cooking a multi-course meal, the juiciest roast chicken, or just some really good scrambled eggs, Ruhlman reveals how a cook's success boils down to the same twenty concepts. With the illuminating expertise that has made him one of the most esteemed food journalists, Ruhlman explains the hows and whys of each concept and reinforces those discoveries through 100 recipes for everything from soups to desserts, all detailed in over 300 photographs. Cooks of all levels will revel in Ruhlman's game-changing *Twenty*.

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From Reader Review Ruhlman's Twenty: The Ideas and Techniques that Will Make You a Better Cook for online ebook

Ada-Marie says

Meh. Too snobby and esoteric for most home cooks.

Jackie says

Just Finished Reading 'Ruhlman's Twenty: The Ideas and Techniques that Will Make You a Better Cook' by Michael Ruhlman.

This was definitely a technique book that just happened to include recipes to fully showcase the 20 different topics highlighted. Some topics were very basic, such as 'Salt'. I try to avoid using a lot of salt but have lately realized how much a little bit can go a long way to making flavors pop. This helped to explain why.

Other topics were explanations of cooking methods such as roast or bake and the differences between the two.

I would definitely recommend this for those just learning to cook and also for those who want to know the 'whys' of good cooking.

Cinnamon says

If you are trying to learn how to cook, or how to cook better, the basic descriptions, step-by-step photographs, and supporting recipes in this book will help you on both counts. I have friends who claim they can't boil water who I'm convinced will be able to cook consistently well if they were to read this book cover to cover and then try to make several recipes in each section. The info at the back matches up with what I've provided to people who are interested in what they need to purchase to be a good cook.

Rob says

I don't know if I can describe how much I loved this book. What a superb accomplishment.

The Goodreads blurb describes Twenty as a cookbook, which is sort of true. It does have recipes, and it is about how to cook, but I think that description is a terrible disservice to it. I wouldn't like to have to describe it in one sentence, but if I had to, I would say that it's not so much about how to cook as it is about how to cook *better.*

The basic structure of the book, as you're probably already aware, is a set of the twenty (mostly) distinct techniques that Ruhlman regards as the essential techniques of a well-rounded cook. We can debate whether "well-rounded" is the right term -- initially I wrote "complete," but I suspect an absolute is inappropriate -- but I think it's approximately on target.

Ruhlman begins by explaining what each technique comprises, delves into the theory of why you would choose to use that technique along with some nuances, and then provides several recipes that use that technique, so that you can put theory into practice. Recipes here are an educational tool, a lab, a practicum.

Twenty is a lot of things, but most of all it's blueprint for self-improvement, and I value that very highly. I found it educational and also inspirational. I don't know that this is where I'd recommend a new cook start, although you certainly could work through the chapters and recipes and learn a lot; there are some important things to know -- like safe knife technique, for example, and lots of others. I think a new cook also needs a gentler introduction. My recommendation for someone who doesn't cook already remains Bittman's How To Cook Everything: The Basics.

The audience I'd suggest for this book is basically people like me: people who already cook, but are seeking to elevate their game to the next level. For that audience I can't recommend Twenty enough. A remarkable achievement, and one that will help me, personally, to improve and change the way I think about cooking.

Heather says

Enjoying this book so much! Will likely need to purchase as it is going back to the library soon...

Joe Haack says

I read this "cookbook" cover to cover. And I cooked some of the recipes along the way. What sets this book apart is how he illustrates key ideas and techniques with recipes, rather than the other way around. He is also a wordsmith. Sometimes his language about food borders on the over-sensual, but his enthusiasm about food was so earnest and helpful it didn't bother me as much.

It was a library book, but it will be purchased for the shelf - it was that good.

Laura says

This is like going to cooking school, except at home and at your own pace. Much of what he writes about, Nik and I have figured out in bits and pieces over the past few years. I still learned a TON about cooking though and this helped me feel much more confident in the kitchen. Highly recommended to anyone who likes to cook or wants to become a better cook!

Colleen says

I like to consider myself an accomplished home cook, but this book still broke down some basic techniques in specific ways I had never thought of. The explanation of techniques will teach you the variables you need to understand and explore to truly master cooking. The recipes involved sound pretty good as well - I expect to try the butter poaching technique very soon

Michelle says

Sit down and read this book rather than just look at the recipes. Recommended by Alton Brown on his podcast, Ruhlman presents 20 techniques for cooking as a "cook's manifesto". I love the theory behind this book and love how both Ruhlman and Brown think of cooking as a science and want home cooks to understand it too. This book does a great job of building that knowledge base.

Vicki says

I actually can't say enough good things about this book. You know how when you have an acquaintance who's a total pain in the butt about all the great, amazing things they know how to do in the kitchen? Let's assume that this acquaintance of yours actually does know how to cook. Often, if they're a total blowhard, it's hard to listen to the tips they're throwing out, because they've made themselves sort of unbearable through their arrogance. (No, I don't know anybody like that. Why do you ask?)

The reason for this long-winded set up is so I can say how very much I like the tone in this book. Ruhlman is friendly, gives credit where credit is due, and delivers some amazing info about techniques. I tried out the raw zucchini salad after his chapter about salting, and it was a revelation. Great advice, great writing. I'm giving this book as a gift this year to more than a couple of people.

Joel says

I laugh at the reviewer who said Michael Ruhlman is out of touch by having his second point of twenty be about salt. Thomas Heller says seasoning is the most important, and he is right. This a great book for those in search of a reason for everything. In cooking it comes down to thinking and seasoning and knowing what might happen.

Michael Ruhlman has been on an adventure through food that I have followed for years. This is a great addition to his works.

Rebecca says

I checked this out from the library, after reading I've decided I need to own it. This is the best book I've ever read about the basics of cooking: techniques. He lists twenty of them, thus the title. First technique: Think, think ahead and prep. I've always said cooking is 80% prep work and here he is telling how important mise en place is (or prep, as I call it in English) and how to do it.

He explains the difference between similar techniques and how to choose using one over another and gives really useful advice like how to cut a perfect circle out of parchment paper. Each technique is followed up by a few recipes that concentrate on using that technique so you can get the hang of it.

This book is like having a master chef hanging over your shoulder, directing you to be a better cook. I highly recommend it!

Lynne Van Wagenen says

This book helps you understand some of the basic ingredients and techniques. I cultured some cream, then made butter with it. I never knew that you could do that. I learned to salt my meat ahead of time. It doesn't dry it out. I made the best roast ever--seasoned just with salt 24 hours ahead and slow roasted.

Tuck says

this won a james beard award 2011

i will give the 20 ruhlman so clearly writes about, and it won;t spoil a thing if you see them here and still get the book, as it is a fun, fact filled, foodie foundational type of book.

think

salt

water

onion

acid

egg

butter

dough

batter

sugar

sauce

vinaigrette

soup

saute

roast

braise

poach

grill

fry

chill

would have gotten 5stars if it'd had more pictures. the pictures it DOES have are great, clear and helpful. recipes are clear, times are spelled out, and seem delicious.

ok, here is a spoiler, salt is the most important thing a cook needs to know, know how to use, and exploit.

Quentin says

A basic cookbook combining fundamental techniques, some gastronomic science, and some exemplary recipes, Ruhlman's 20 is a different kind of cookbook in that it's not about a theme, or an ingredient, or a style. It's about how to think about cooking, with an emphasis on "think". Over and over again, Ruhlman emphasizes that we should see cooking as a process, not simply as a list of ingredients and the steps of combining them.

I liked Ruhlman's book "Ratio" which was helpful in getting me to do some baking. This book is more expansive in its scope, but it had some good advice that I'm going to try in my own kitchen. The main piece of advice was to simply be conscious of what I'm doing at each step of the process of cooking a dish or a meal.
