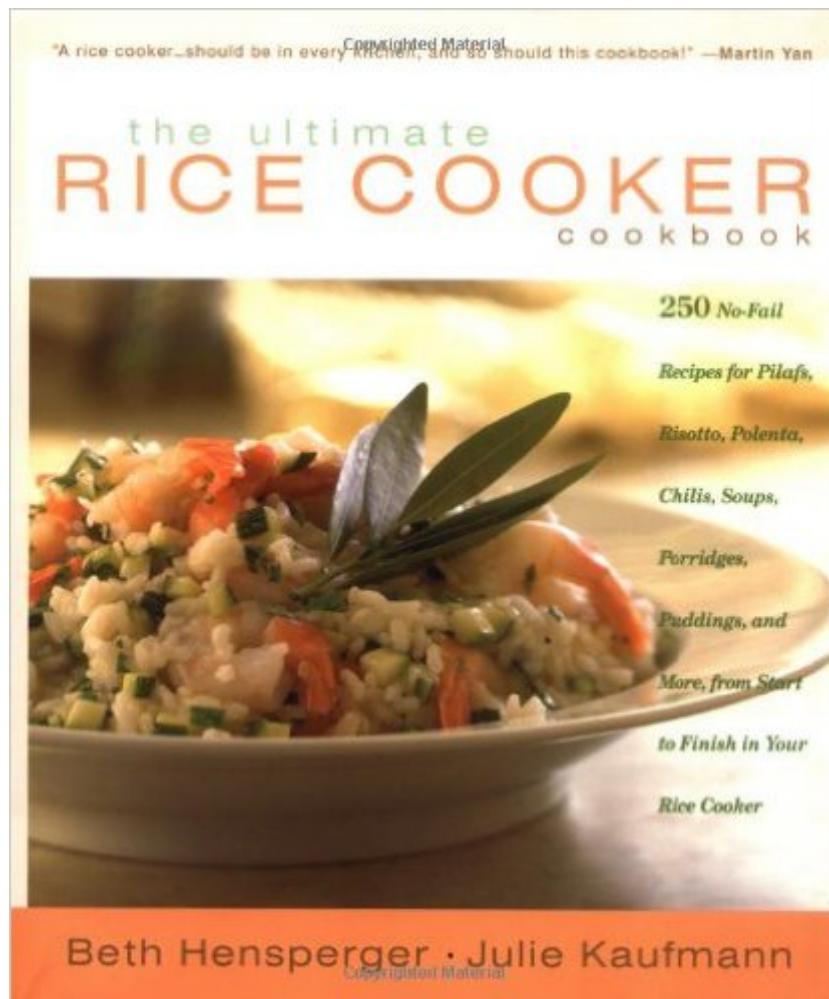


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The Ultimate Rice Cooker Cookbook



Synopsis

This book unlocks the rice cookers potential for the American kitchen.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought a rice cooker, learned the basics of preparing rice and then wanted to expand my skills. So I bought a few cookbooks but this is the ONLY one that has recipes my whole family loves, so much so that we use it at least 3-5 times a week and never feel like we're eating the same thing. The recipes aren't just for rice but for all sorts of grains and vegetables and fruits as well. In fact, I'm ready to throw out my crockpot because the meals prepared in the rice cooker are much better, don't have that overcooked, stewed taste you can get with a crockpot and have all the convenience and ease that I need with my busy schedule. The directions are clear and the recipes range from the simple (plain cooked grains) to the more complex (rice with coconut and currants... or grits with cheese and spices) The ultimate test of a good cookbook, of course, is getting compliments and raves about the food. Every time I've made a recipe from this book, the food has been devoured quickly. We rarely have leftovers and my son's friends even make a point of looking in the kitchen to see if the rice cooker is turned on (yes, the recipes in this cookbook are THAT good).

I got this book as a gift after debating whether to buy it for about six months. I have a fuzzy logic cooker and wasn't sure if the recipes in the book were for regular rice cookers or the fuzzy logic type. Turns out its for all kinds of rice cookers. In fact the book basically is a reference guide to rice, rice cookers, rice recipes and anything else eatable the authors attempted to cook in the appliance.

The only thing that fuzzy logic cookers get left out of is steamed items. Each recipe tells you if it is appropriate for the rice cooker you have. Most of the recipes seem to work for all cookers. Comprehensive is the word that came to mind the first time I sat down with this cook book. The first section deals with rice cookers and describes each kind in detail and how to use it. That takes 16 pages. Then they move on to every type of rice you might encounter in the whole rice loving world. That's another 16 pages. Included in that section is a page devoted to how to make packaged rice mixes in the cooker; things like rice-a-roni or some of the new orleans red beans and rice mixes or casbah brand. The recipes start appearing on page 34 and one thing to know is that **THERE ARE NO ILLUSTRATIONS**. The recipes are separated into chapters like pilafs, risottos, deserts, and other unlikely items, like little meals, dim sum and grains. What is convenient is that at the start of each chapter is a little table of contents for that chapter listing the name and page of each recipe. What a great idea. In each chapter if there is any step of a recipe that can't be done in a cooker that gets its own little recipe. The recipes are laid out well; the ingredients are listed in a different color type than the directions. There are some things they want you to do that seem weird, like melting butter and sauteing things in the cooker using the quick cook cycle with the lid open. I haven't tried that yet. One day, but not today. Making different breakfast oatmeals and porridges seems like high adventure to me. There are lots of side items about rice or other ingredients, including a list of useful items found in asian markets. Things like that are printed on different colored paper. Even a small history of rice....

'The Ultimate Rice Cooker Cookbook' by bread baking guru Beth Hensperger and culinary colleague, Julie Kaufmann is exactly the book I imagined may be possible the moment I was exposed to a rice cooker when I became part of a Filipino household which, like virtually all Asian-American households, bought rice by the multiple 25 pound sack at a time and made rice for every evening meal in the week. The whole rice cooking culture, with its large rice dispenser holding up to 50 pounds of rice at a time and the handy little levers at the bottom which dispensed either one, two, or three portions of rice into the aluminum rice cooker chamber was a culinary revelation to my western experience. Being familiar with the slow cooker, which could be used for many different kinds of dishes, I was certain, upon seeing this clever little simple gadget which made perfect cooked rice by turning itself off when all the water had evaporated, that it could do much more than simply cook rice. Well, this book is the perfect realization of my expectations. As luck would have it, I have owned a copy of this book for years, as I bought it in fond remembrance of that lost household, but as my mother has no taste for rice, it went on my shelf along with the small rice

cooker I bought upon moving back to the Pennsylvania Dutch culinary world. I rediscovered this book upon my reviewing Hensperger and Kaufmann's superb new book, 'Not Your Mother's Slow Cooker Cookbook'. Upon looking at the authors' previous works, it was perfectly obvious to me that this team had already done a book on the rice cooker, and I was embarrassed to realize that I had this little gem collecting dust on my shelves. Well, I am here to tell you that this book is every bit as good as the later 'Not Your Mother's Slow Cooker Cookbook'. Not only does it thoroughly cover the whole world of cooking rice, it has many chapters on my expected recipes for cooking non-rice dishes such as beans, puddings, porridges, polenta, plus lots of unexpected rice applications such as pilafs and risottos. One of the most important things to learn about rice cookers from this book is that the world of modern appliances is divided into the simple on / off machines I know and the more advanced electronic machines. The former type are about as simple as it gets, just one step removed from a slow cooker with a temperature sensor which turns off the heat when it senses the temperature going above the boiling point of water. The two enhancements to this very simple design are a 'keep warm' feature and a steaming basket. These appliances are so simple that you literally have to unplug them to turn them off. The latter machines are much more complicated, with digital readout controls and a sensor that works on the weight of the contents of the cooking vessel rather than the temperature. There are two drawbacks of these advanced 'fuzzy logic' machines. One is that many of them cannot be set up to steam. The other is that some of the best may only be available in the Orient. One of the many nice things about this book is that it covers recipes for all different sizes of cooker, which seem to range from one or two person size to big, commercial machines capable of making 12 to 16 cups at a time. One unusual thing about cooking in a rice cooker is that unlike almost all other savory forms of cooking, one must play close attention to measuring both the rice and the liquid to achieve good results with any model of rice cooking. This fact is emphasized by the fact that there is a special measure for rice that is different than any conventional metric or English measure and you get one of these measures with every rice cooker. Oddly, one widely used and exceptionally easy and reliable measurement for rice cookery is the measurement of water over the rice. One puts enough water in to cover the rice by the depth of the first joint on your index finger. Mysteriously, this seems to work regardless of the length of your fingers. As with many books on popular appliances such as the food processor, the blender, the slow cooker, and the pressure cooker, the book includes several chapters which deal with recipes for precursors to rice cookery such as stocks and recipes for using rice cookery leftovers, such as fried rice. Neither of these chapters uses the rice cooker to make these dishes, but they are all used in conjunction with the rice cooker. One of the very best aspects of this book is its discussion of the

star main ingredient, rice. Like tea, virtually all varieties of rice are part of the same species. The only notable 'rice' which is not 'Oryza sativa' is 'wild rice' which is a totally different grain native to the New World. Asian rice comes in two main varieties, 'indica' and 'japonica' which, while both being varieties of the same species, are about as similar as a dachshund and a whippet. Within these two main varieties are numerous little variations with properties which make cooking rice a lot more complicated than cooking beans which, in spite of their being many different species, generally can be cooked in basically the same way. Speaking of beans, the authors succeed in giving us information about beans that I did not even find in a book on beans. Among other things, it states that the lighter the bean, the longer it will need to cook. My only warning is that also like books on other appliances, some recipe adaptations are done more to show you can do this with a rice cooker than is the very best method for doing the recipe. This is an excellent book for any foodie or rice-cooking lover.

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