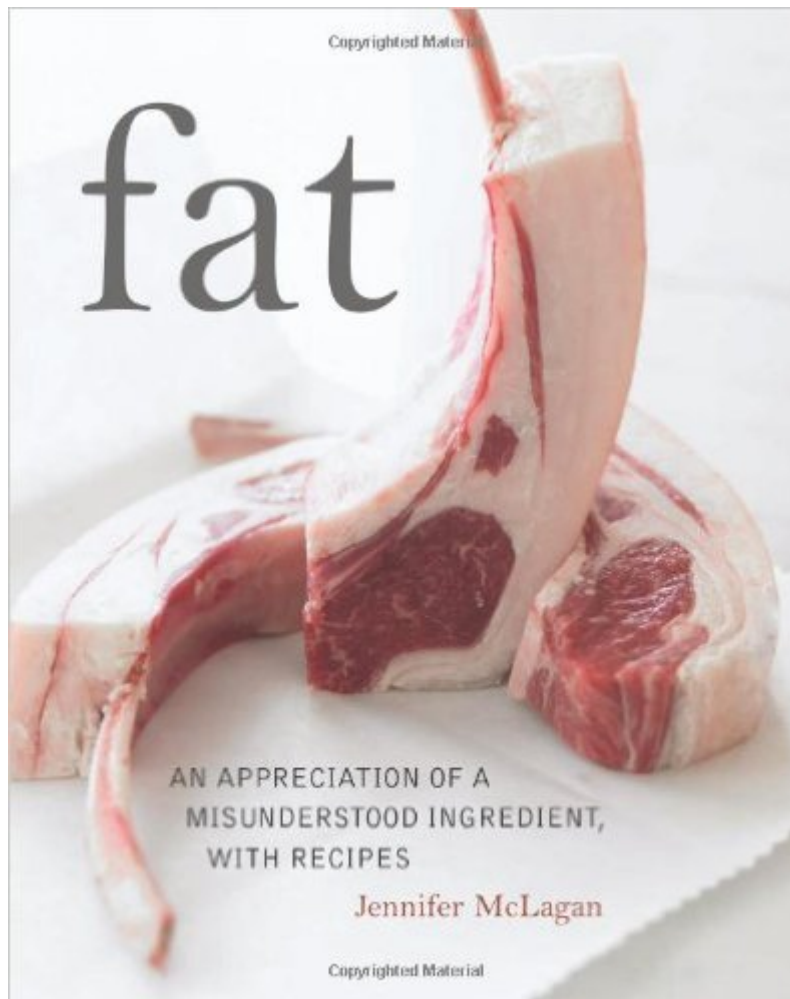


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Fat: An Appreciation Of A Misunderstood Ingredient, With Recipes



Synopsis

A rich and unapologetic celebration of this luscious food. For all of history, minus the last thirty years, fat has been at the center of human diets and cultures. When scientists theorized a link between saturated fat and heart disease, industry, media, and government joined forces to label fat a greasy killer, best avoided. But according to Jennifer McLagan, not only is our fat phobia overwrought, it also hasn't benefited us in any way. Instead it has driven us into the arms of trans fats and refined carbohydrates, and fostered punitive, dreary attitudes toward food "that wellspring of life and pleasure. In *Fat*, McLagan sets out with equal parts passion, scholarship, and appetite to win us back to a healthy relationship with animal fats. She starts by defusing fat's bad rap, both reminding us of what we already know "that fat is fundamental to the flavor of our food "and enlightening us with the many ways fat (yes, even animal fat) is indispensable to our health. Mostly, though, *Fat* is about pleasures "the satisfactions of handling good ingredients skillfully, learning the cultural associations of these primal foodstuffs, recollecting and creating personal memories of beloved dishes, and gratifying the palate and the soul with fat's irreplaceable savor. *Fat* lavishes the reader with more than 100 recipes from simple to intricate, classic to contemporary, including:

- Butter-Poached Scallops
- Homemade Butter
- Carnitas
- Duck Confit
- Prosciutto-Wrapped Halibut with Sage Butter
- Steak and Kidney Pie
- Salted Butter Tart

Observing that though we now know everything about olive oil, we may not know what to do with lard or bone marrow, McLagan offers extensive guidance on sourcing, rendering, flavoring, using, and storing animal fats, whether butter or bacon, schmaltz or suet. Stories, lore, quotations, and tips touching on fat's place in the kitchen and in the larger culture round out this rich and unapologetic celebration of food at its very best.

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Customer Reviews

I love this book and it could be my cookbook of the year. I have a library and I have been cooking long enough that I do not really need a cookbook unless it is very good. I bought the book primarily for reading about fats and why they could be good for you. However, I have made several recipes including the above mentioned roast chicken, which was fabulous. I slow baked a lamb shoulder by her method of slow cooking. And I saved the fat to make some lamb fritters, (not of this book) frying them in the left over fat. I have baked sweet potatoes in lard inspired by the book. I have rendered lard for myself and my girls. It has all been quite fun. And now that I am having so much fun and the food is so good, I really am not sure I care about the health issues. Here is one thing I will say, since I have cooked out of this book this week, I am not hungry or craving food.

I am so tired of fat free everything these days in the grocery store, so it was a real pleasure to read about fat...glorious fat. Maybe my cholesterol is getting jacked to Jesus, but my food has flavor now that I am cooking with fat. I tried McLagan's roasted chicken recipe and it was the best chicken ever...flavorful, juicy...I swoon at the memory. I look forward to trying more of the recipes from the book as soon as I can locate sources for well marbled meats, fatty fowl, and pork bellies. My in-laws are in their eighties and have cooked with lard all their lives. They are happy, healthy, thin, and the food just tastes good. I may croak a few weeks earlier than expected, but I will go out with happy taste buds. I really enjoyed reading about fat.

You've just gotta love a book that has a big fatty slab of meat on it! And while fat has gotten an unfair bad rap over the past few decades from the low-fat diet apologists, the fact is that fat consumption is an important part of living as healthy a lifestyle as you can. This is something Jennifer McLagan wanted to convey with her book to give people a greater "appreciation" for what is arguably the most flavorful ingredient you could put into a recipe (nope, not salt, not sugar, and not spices of any kind can compete with good old-fashioned FAT!). From butter to meat fats, McLagan gives you quite a history lesson on the subject of fat (and you can't miss the section on where the ghastly margarine came from!) to whet your appetite for some truly incredible fat-based dishes to make. Not all of them are low in carbohydrates, but they can easily be adapted to just about any

diet. Except for a low-fat one. Sorry low-fatties!

I should amend the title (it was just a come-on!) to say that I rarely read cookbooks: I buy them if the recipes look good (this has led to a library of about 600 books), but almost never read the chef's musings. In this case, the reverse has been true. I've read "Fat" from cover to cover, with fascination. Jennifer McLagan is a highly articulate advocate for this much-maligned (nowadays) ingredient; her observations give great support to those of us who enjoy cooking for taste, rather than rectitude. And the recipes span a huge number of cuisines, from French to Indian to "American." Last night was my first adventure with a "Fat" recipe, Cheong Liew's braised pork belly. It was a spectacular success. I am now going into my "cook everything from this entire book" phase, and look forward to rillettes, confits, palmiers, and bone marrow crostini. A MUST-have for any good cook.

...there was a magical land where people ate real food, and it didn't kill them. Then one day an evil wizard came along, and told everybody they had to live off lentil loaf and canola oil. And the wizard's name was--Dr. Oz! Okay, a serious review--this is a great cookbook. I've made a few of the recipes in this book (braised oxtail and bone marrow tacos), and they are really good. But my absolute favorite part is the beginning, where McLagan discusses why animal fats are unjustly blamed for heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Dare I say the current food pyramid is a political plot? A vast left-wing conspiracy? Am I the only person who saw SOYLENT GREEN? Of course, gentle reader, you will have to watch your portion sizes when you cook these foods--this is not an "all you can eat" air-popped whatever. The point is not to eat all you can, but to get full, and stop eating. I especially liked this book because I just finished reading "The Vegetarian Myth", which is a much longer argument against a grain-based diet, and is chock-full of nifty scientific evidence that animal fat doesn't kill people. But get this cookbook--you will feel like Martha Stewart and Ted Nugent all at once!

IF you like to cook in teflon and don't like to use anything with "oil" in the name, don't read this book. IF you don't like eating food that you think you need an engineering degree to make, read this book. I am not some Zen guru or yoga master...I am a guy who has always liked to cook. What I seem to notice and dislike more and more these days is that everything we seem to eat is "produced" somewhere...in some factory. For me, the beauty of cooking is in simplicity. FAT is a book that has helped me to focus on the important parts of cooking. I am not sure how accurate all

of the information in the book is, but 99.99% of it just makes sense in my head...and that is what I care about. If you love to cook or you love someone who loves to cook, then get this book. You will be happy you did.

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