

New cookbooks make great holiday gifts

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The holiday season is upon us, a time for gathering friends around our dinner table and giving gifts to our loved ones. What better gift to give, or receive, than a beautiful cookbook that unravels the secrets of making the perfect red wine risotto or baked apples with caramel rum-raisin sauce?

The following cookbooks promise to keep the sweet and savory smells of holiday cooking wafting through your home all year long:

• "Unplugged Kitchen" by Viana La Place, (William Morrow & Company, Inc., \$25)

The simply illustrated white cover sets the theme for this cookbook's contents: Eloquent, simple everyday cooking that reflects the author's Italian and European heritage. "Spaghetti with Tender Parsley and Lemon" comes accented with little more than mint leaves, sea salt, black pepper and lemon. "Unplugged Kitchen" presents its recipes for salads, stews, soups, appetizers, pastas and desserts in a visually uncluttered manner. La Place writes sensually, her comments often stirring up the feel of warm Mediterranean breezes. No food processors used in this book, only the pleasurable physical contact of hand and food.

• "Rick Bayless's Mexican Kitchen" (Scribner \$35).

The author, an acclaimed chef and restaurant owner, says Mex-

A quick look:

- "Unplugged Kitchen"
- "Rick Bayless's Mexican Kitchen"
- "365 Easy One-Dish Meals"
- "Old-Fashioned Christmas Cookbook"
- "Healthy Homestyle Desserts"
- "Four-Star Desserts".

ican cuisine is "rich with complex flavors, remarkably delicious, invigorating and satisfying." And it all starts with the "essential recipes," 14 building blocks of salsas, sauces and seasonings that weave their way through many of this cookbook's more than 160 recipes. Thought that pumpkins were only for carving? Try "Smoky Braised Mexican Pumpkin with Seared White Onions." How many ways do you love tacos? Try a dozen, including "Crispy Black Bean-Bacon Tacos" or "Tacos of Creamy Braised Chard, Potatoes and Poblanos." From soups to desserts, Mexican Kitchen celebrates the marriage of full-flavored cooking with simplicity of preparation.

• "365 Easy One-Dish Meals" by Natalie Haughton, (Harper & Row \$16.95).

Flip through this compact, spi-

ral-bound cookbook for a year's worth of great recipes like "Mom's Fast Chili," "Easy Mine-astrow" or "Super Taco Skillet Pie." Easy One-Dish Meals makes efficient use of your skillet, slow cooker and casserole dishes, and a few recipes call for more than 20 minutes preparation time. The recipes may be quick, but they're hearty, varied and make the best of American cooking available to today's busy cooks. No illustrations; just nice, easy-to-read black and white print.

• "Old-Fashioned Christmas Cookbook," (Time-Life Books \$24.95)

Beautifully illustrated glossy pages of memorable Christmas recipes tempt the eye and the palate in this cookbook: "Christmas Eve Borsch with Polish Mushroom Pockets," "Glazed Carrots with Red Grapes," "Honey-Glazed Roast Turkey with Orange and Sweet Potato Stuffing," and "Tourtiere," a savory, spicy pork pie eaten France on Christmas Eve. And what's a Christmas cookbook without recipes for plum pudding and sugar plum? This one has both, as well as ideas for food gifts and holiday decorations. A perfect Christmas gift for your favorite host or hostess.

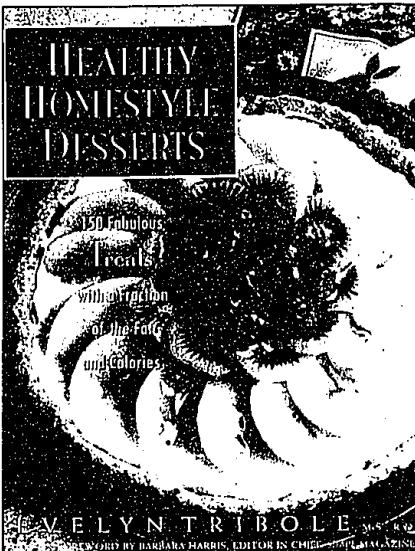
• "Healthy Homestyle Desserts" by Evelyn Tribole, (Viking \$24.95)

The author, a registered dietitian, proves that "healthy desserts" is not an oxymoron

with the 150 great recipes she includes in this cookbook. If "Frozen Peanut Butter Fudge Pie" "Triple-Layer German Chocolate Cake" or "Fudgy Black-bottom Pie" is not on your menu, put it there. Tribole puts a healthy twist on fatty desserts by substituting low- and no-fat products: egg substitutes, buttermilk and crispy cereal for those fat-laden ones. Author of the best-selling "Healthy Homestyle Cooking," has appeared on ABC's "Good Morning America" and written nutritional features for Good Housekeeping, Redbook and USA Today. "Healthy Homestyle Desserts" includes substitution and quantity reduction charts.

• "Four-Star Desserts" by Emily Luchetti, (Harper Collins \$32.50)

Both the illustrations and the recipes in this compact, glossy-coated cookbook are luscious. The chapters are divided according to main ingredients, like chocolate, and summer berries. The author's pairing of nouns and adjectives make every recipe sound appealing. Who could resist "Morning Apple Cake," "Raspberry Champagne Cream Cake," or "Tipay Italian Nectarines"? These are not heart-smart recipes, but when cream, sugar and butter result in a dessert art form, who cares. Luchetti, author of "Stars Desserts," is the former pastry chef of the highly acclaimed San Francisco brasserie, Stars.



VELYN TRIBOLE
WITH A WORD BY BARBARA HARRIS, EDITOR IN CHIEF OF LIVELONG MAGAZINE

Healthy desserts: "Healthy Homestyle Desserts," by Evelyn Tribole is sure to delight the calorie conscious on your holiday gift list.

Sensational stew:
Burgundy Beef
Stew is the
perfect meal
for those
colder days.



Stew stirs up good taste and good smell

Cookbook author Jim Fobel loves to cook — especially when it's cold outside.

Fobel says one of his cooler weather favorites is Burgundy Beef Stew, "a dish that benefits the house as well as the palate. The long, slow simmering warms the kitchen, provides incredible aromas and results in sensational stew."

"Gentle simmering brings out a bigger, deeper flavor in the beef as well as making it fork-tender," says Fobel, author of "Jim Fobel's Big Flavors," winner of the 1996 James Beard Foundation Award for the Best General Cookbook.

This stew is a favorite for entertaining — he makes it a day in advance then reheats it

just before serving. Since the beef is teamed with carrots, potatoes, onions and mushrooms, only simple accompaniments are needed. Fobel suggests a mixed green salad and warm, crusty bread.

To make this savory one-pot meal, Fobel uses three easy steps: browning the beef, adding liquid to cover, and finally, covering tightly and gently simmering. He begins with economical beef chunks and cuts it into pieces which he browns slowly and evenly.

"Don't rush this process," says Fobel.

After browning, he adds a full-bodied red wine, bay leaves and thyme, then gently simmers the beef. The end result captures the

essence of Fobel's cooking style — big flavors that are bold, complex, aromatic, assertive and exciting.

BURGUNDY BEEF STEW

Makes 8 servings (1 3/4 cups)

3 pounds boneless beef chuck, cut into 1 1/2-2 inch pieces
2 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 can (13 3/4 to 14 1/2 ounces) ready-to-serve beef broth
1 1/2 cups red Burgundy wine
2 tablespoons tomato paste
4 large cloves garlic, crushed
4 bay leaves
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
2 pounds small new potatoes, scrubbed
1 pound small carrots, cut into 1 1/2-2 inch pieces
8 to 10 small boiling onions, peeled
1/2 pound medium mushrooms, cut in half
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
In 5-quart Dutch oven, heat 1-

1/2 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add one third of beef and brown evenly, stirring occasionally. Remove beef with slotted spoon; set aside. Brown the remaining beef in 2 batches, adding 1/2 tablespoon of remaining oil each time. Sprinkle flour in same pan; cook and stir over medium heat 1 minute. (Mixture will be very dry.) Stir in beef, wine, and tomato paste whisking until blended. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Add garlic, bay leaves, salt, thyme and reserved beef. Cover tightly and simmer 1 3/4 hours or until beef is tender. Add potatoes, carrots and onions; cover and continue cooking 45 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in mushrooms; simmer, uncovered, 10 minutes. Remove bay leaves; stir in parsley.

Nutrition information:
Calories: 432
Protein: 34 g
Carbohydrates: 35 g
Fat: 14 g
Iron: 81 mg
Sodium: 577 mg
Cholesterol: 91 mg

Crust is not missed in the Pumpkin Pie Nada

See related story on Taste front
PUMPKIN PIE NADA

Serves 8

This is a very easy and great-tasting crustless pumpkin pie. It's full-bodied enough that you really don't miss the crust.

oil spray. Bake for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. You may want to cover the edges with aluminum foil for last 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool then spread with topping.

TOPPING

4 tablespoons no-fat sour cream
2 ounces fat-free cream cheese, softened at room temperature
1 tablespoon sugar

With an electric mixer or blender, mix all ingredients together until smooth.

Nutrition per serving

Calories: 186
Protein: 7.2 grams
Fat: 0.66 grams
Sodium: 196.93 mg
Carbohydrates: 39 grams
Calories from fat: 3.38 percent

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix all ingredients well. Pour into a nine-inch pie plate that has been sprayed with vegetable

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