



Gift Guide: The Ten Best Cookbooks of 2009

Posted by Caroline Russock, December 3, 2009



I've always had a big collection of cookbooks, many of which have been given to me around this time of year. But before starting at [Cook the Book](#) I was much more of a fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants style cook.

My heavy shelves of cookbooks acted more like coffee table books. I'd browse for inspiration, then head into the kitchen armed only with an idea. I reserved my recipe-based cooking for projects that I felt required exactitude and expertise that surpassed my own. It might sound a little overconfident, but I had always considered myself an intuitive cook—and a stubborn one at that.

Cooking pretty much exclusively from cookbooks for the past year has been an exercise in self-discipline, and a fantastic one. My repertoire has expanded infinitely and my technical skills have improved vastly. With every new cookbook came an exciting trip to the store to gather supplies. My kitchen was no longer a place just to make dinner—it was a test lab. Cooking other peoples' recipes offers an insight into their lives, their families and childhoods, their homes, restaurant kitchens, and pantries.

We've gone through stacks upon stacks of cookbooks to come up with a **Top 10 Cookbooks of 2009** list to inspire some gift ideas for the cookbook enthusiasts on your holiday shopping list. Without further ado, here they are in no particular order after the jump.



[L.A.'s Original Farmers Market Cookbook](#) by JoAnn Cianciulli: This collection of recipes from the namesake market tells the story of the diverse vendors that make up this uniquely Los Angeles institution. With cuisines from places as varied as Russia, Mexico, and Indonesia, this book is a veritable melting pot of amazing dishes. It's kind of like going to a mall food court—a really good

one. [Available online](#), \$22.95 Recommended Recipes: [Kalbi](#) (Korean) and [Spanakopita](#) (Greek)