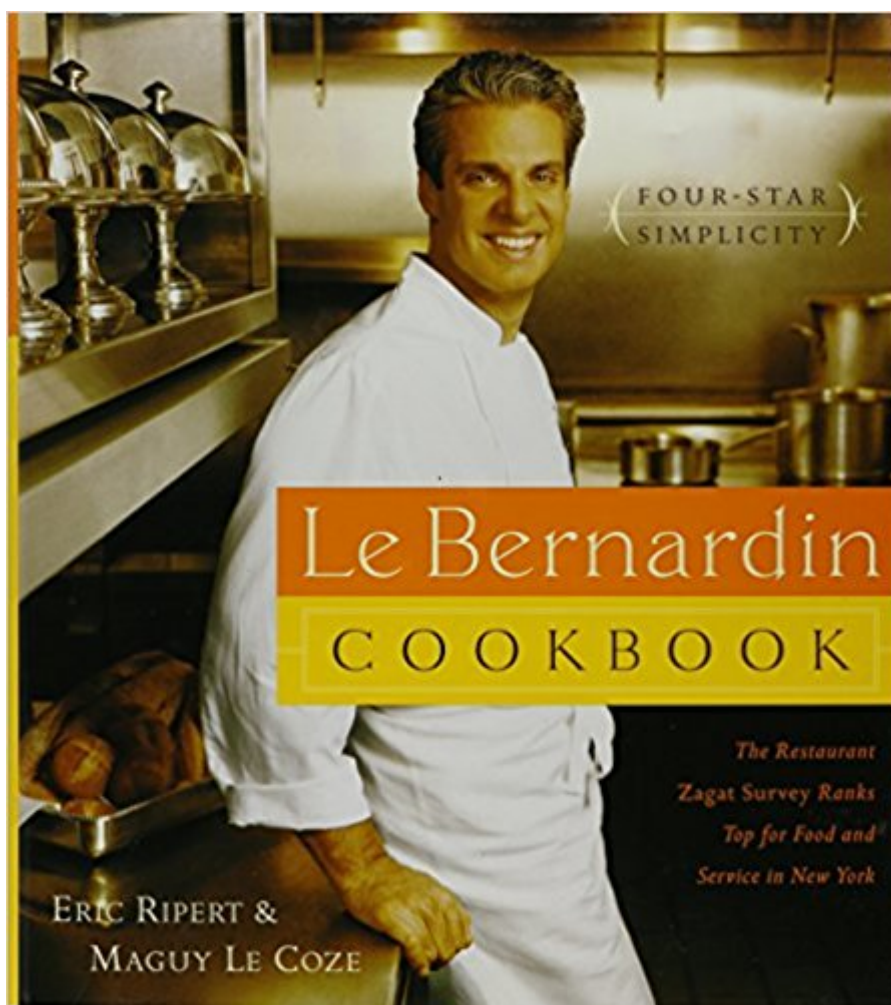


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Le Bernardin Cookbook: Four-Star Simplicity



Synopsis

Le Bernardin, New York's only four-star seafood restaurant, is renowned not only for its impeccable cuisine but also for its understated elegance. Now the Le Bernardin experience is made accessible to everyone in more than 100 meticulously formulated and carefully tested recipes for all courses, from appetizers through dessert. The food served in Le Bernardin's beautiful dining room is as subtle and refined as any in the world, and because fish and shellfish are often best turned out quickly and simply, the recipes in this book can be reproduced by any home cook. Maguy Le Coze traces the origins of Le Bernardin's "simplicity" to her late brother, Gilbert, the restaurant's legendary cofounder and first chef: "Gilbert was not a classically trained chef," she says. "He had never been to culinary school. When he cooked, he made things he liked, and things he knew. He focused on the quality and freshness of the fish. He made nages and vinaigrettes because he'd never made a hollandaise or a béarnaise. He focused on flavors that were delicate, subtle, herb-infused." Today, Chef Eric Ripert carries on that tradition with dishes such as Poached Halibut on Marinated Vegetables, Pan-Roasted Grouper with Wild Mushrooms and Artichokes, and Grilled Salmon with Mushroom Vinaigrette. And, of course, there are the desserts for which Le Bernardin is also so well known--from Chocolate Millefeuille to Honeyed Pear and Almond Cream Tarts. Essential to the experience of dining at Le Bernardin and to the Le Bernardin Cookbook are the dynamic and charming personalities of Maguy Le Coze and Eric Ripert, whose lively dialogue and colorful anecdotes shine from these pages as brightly as the recipes themselves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

At Le Bernardin, seafood is always the star. From the day this posh restaurant opened in New York City, it was recognized for revolutionizing the way fish was prepared. Chef-owner Gilbert Le Coze and his sister, Maguy, quickly gained an exalted four-star rating for their original, impeccable, exquisite food, which you can now reproduce at home using their recipes. Le Coze avoided using classic sauces because, lacking professional training, he did not know how to make them. Instead, he created Carpaccio of Tuna, a kind of paper-thin sashimi on a plate, Baked Sea Urchins, and Roast Monkfish on a Bed of Sautéed Savory Cabbage with Bacon, a dish that is both rustic and rich. When Gilbert died in 1994, at just 48, his chef de cuisine, Eric Ripert, stepped in and has continued to dazzle with his own fish dishes. Ripert, who had a classical chef's training, is especially innovative in his Poached Lobster in Lemongrass-Ginger Bouillon. If following three pages of meticulously clear instructions for handling the lobsters, puréeing their coral, and much more is not for you, try the salmon fillets served in a magically cream-free but creamy lemon sauce, the Roast Cod Niçoise flavored with basil, capers, and black olives, or the saffron-and-orange-perfumed Fish Soup. Le Bernardin's desserts are famous, too. A reasonably competent cook can create ecstasy with the Bitter Chocolate Soufflé Cake, lavish with dark chocolate, butter, eggs, and just one tablespoon of flour. If you read mostly cookbooks, the spirited dialogue between Ripert and Maguy, their anecdotes of culinary adventures, and characteristically Gallic commentary may divert you. Typically, Maguy says, "My favorite way to eat calamari is with a nice green salad. How American!" Seems the French only ate a lettuce salad with meats until nouvelle cuisine came along in the 1970s, and Maguy still considers it an aberration with seafood. Just as her taste has changed, this book may open you to new experiences with seafood. --Dana Jacobi

The first cookbook from Le Coze (owner) and Ripert (executive chef) of Le Bernardin, New York City's only four-star seafood restaurant, may spark the frustration of readers who have had difficulty getting a reservation at this culinary landmark. Such an appetizer such as Poached Baby Lobster on Asparagus and Cepe Risotto or entree like Pepper and Fennel-Crusted Salmon with Shallot-Madeira Sauce and Truffle-Scented Polenta promise a nirvana-like experience that will be hard to replicate at home (despite the collection's subtitle). This is four-star restaurant fare prepared by a master (and staff), requiring of home cooks a source of ultra-fresh seafood, deftness in esthetic presentation and considerable patience. There are some widely useful tips?capitalize on fresh herbs; use top-quality ingredients?and some recipes are indeed simple, e.g., Salmon Baked with

Tomato and Mint; Broiled Shrimp with Garlic Butter; and Coffee Creme are within reach of anyone. But many recipes will challenge adventurous chefs. Baked Sea Urchins require nerve and dexterity. Salmon and Black Truffle Strudels aren't even attempted at the restaurant when it's busy, says Le Coze, and Ripert admits it took him two weeks to master Lobster with Coral Sauce, Asparagus, and Mushrooms. With an introduction recalling the restaurant's history, opened by Le Coze with her late brother Gilbert, this volume illustrates the best that a restaurant cookbook can offer, as well as the drawbacks. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Le Bernardin is one of those few places that convince you that, yes! The French had been at the top of the culinary World for a good reason. Histories like the Le Bernardin do not happen much anymore, and it is very rewarding to know more: there's a bit of everything...family run business back in France..., brother and sister coming of age in the 60's, 70's and 80's craziness and landing in New York..., Eric Ripert entering the scene... The quirky two ways comments at the opening of the recipes is a nice touch...,then you understand that a great restaurant needs not only good cooks but soul, personality...those qualities you cannot replicate or mass produce. As for the recipes themselves, they are not for a beginner cook, definitely. This itself makes you appreciate the effort Chef Eric had to go explain each recipe so thoroughly. So: if you want to cook like they do at Le Bernardin..., you need to sweat a bit, of course!

The recipes are fine, but there are no photographs of the food for inspiration.

Great Chef!

Eric on his own terms is a pure culinary delight

This book is a joy to discover and to go back to, time and time again... Great recipes, so elegant made, to help you remember the important parts of preparing great food. E.Ripert is so down to earth, and yet a dreamer and an inventor. But, all the time, remaining very humble and unassuming. The book is superb in its visual appeal with great french charm and joie de vivre. I don't collect cookbooks but I will keep this one close by, to remind me of life made wonderful by just paying attention to the very simplest things....

the introduction, telling the story behind the restaurant, is worth the price of admission.

It's a well written informative book.

What a fabulous book. I spent time reading it and realized my world has just gotten so much bigger.

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