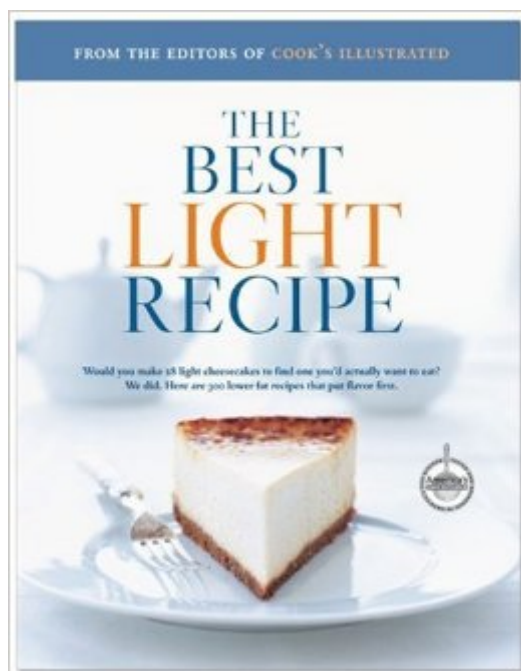


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The Best Light Recipe



Synopsis

'The Best Light Recipes' is a low fat cookbook giving recipes for lower-fat macaroni and cheese, cheesy chicken enchiladas, guacamole, eggplant parmesan, fudgy brownies and much more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book isn't quite 4 stars, in my opinion, but alas, no fractions...Let me start by saying I'm a HUGE fan of Cook's Illustrated. I subscribe to their magazines and their website, I watch their PBS show "America's Test Kitchen" and I own several of their books. What I love about CI is their scientific and educational approach to cooking and baking. They never throw a recipe at you and expect you to go at it blindly. All their recipes are prefaced with a detailed write-up of their test kitchen trials and tribulations...they painstakingly test every single recipe and they take you along for the ride. What you get in the process is not just a "recipe", but a deep understanding of why a recipe works, and with it a better understanding of cooking and/or baking in general. You will definitely improve your skills in the kitchen if you are exposed to CI. With all that being said, it is no surprise that I eagerly anticipated the release of this book. It didn't take long, however, for my enthusiasm to wane. My biggest problem with this book is its one-dimensional approach to "lighten" recipes. By that I mean CI's main focus in this venture was on lowering fat and/or calories, but does not pay enough attention to other problem diet busters, like sugar and bad carbohydrates. I am not proposing that CI should have made this book "low carb", but a marriage of low fat/good carbohydrates would have been a more practical approach, especially given what we have learned

about nutrition in the past few years. The inclusion of more whole grains would have been a much healthier approach. There are so many tasty whole grain alternatives these days to choose from, like brown basmati rice instead of white, or whole wheat pita bread in place of white.

Recently, I found myself in a quandry. I found I couldn't cook worth a damn. I mean, up-in-smoke not-even-the-dog-would-touch-it bad. Bad, bad, bad. I naturally blame my husband for this problem, because I had been a really great cook when I met him. But through the years of his working for restaurants (at night, of course) and having kids, I got out of the habit. So when he finally started showing up at the dinner table, the fare had become dramatically worse. Actually, aside from macaroni and cheese, it seriously stank. Enter my need to re-educate myself. That's when I bought my copy of the Best New Recipe. I had known, from a newlywed subscription of Cook's Illustrated that Christopher Kimball and his team left no asparagus unturned when it came to cooking. I remembered an article on how to steam broccoli. Seriously--they tried every single way up to and including any ridiculous folk tale to find out the best way to steam broccoli. These were the people I needed. Not to mention they covered the consumer end of it too--rating everything from apples to bacon and every conceivable kitchen gadget known to man. Their contribution to the frugal at heart is immeasurable when it comes to what the best buy is for your money. Really, they are the Scrubbing Bubbles of cookbook writers: do the work so you don't have to. The Cook's Illustrated people being who they are, let me tell you, they don't care about anything but taste. And when I started losing weight, the New Best Recipe was, basically, unusable for me except for techniques. That's when I discovered that they had finally caved in and wrote a low-fat tome. I immediately went out and got it. And I like it tremendously.

Determined to create a lower fat cookbook which puts taste first, America's Test Kitchen, in conjunction with Cook's Illustrated magazine, assigned two dozen cooks, editors, food scientists, tasters, and cookware specialists to the task. Creating a play-by-play diary for each recipe, the Test Kitchen describes the low-fat ingredients and combinations of ingredients they tried for each recipe, their experiments with cooking methods, and their results, including the reasons for rejecting all but the final recipe. The end results are sensational. Here you can indulge in lower-fat macaroni and cheese, cheesy chicken enchiladas, guacamole, eggplant parmesan, and fudgy brownies. In fact, if they hadn't shown the fat content and calories for a standard recipe beside the content of their improved, low-fat version, you would not be able to tell by taste that most of these recipes reduce the amount of fat by about 65%. The creamy macaroni and cheese reduces the fat by an amazing

78%.The centerpiece of the cookbook is the cheesecake, which appears on the cover. It does require steps--easy ones--taken in advance, but none of these steps are time-consuming, and the end results are worth it. Since the Test Kitchen made 28 cheesecakes before developing the final recipe, I followed the instructions exactly when I made it this week for Easter. The directions said to bake for one and a half hours, "or until an instant read thermometer inserted into the center of the cheesecake reads 150 degrees," a specific instruction that I've never seen for a cheesecake before, but it worked, with one of our guests declaring the results to be the best cheesecake she's ever eaten (and I agree).

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