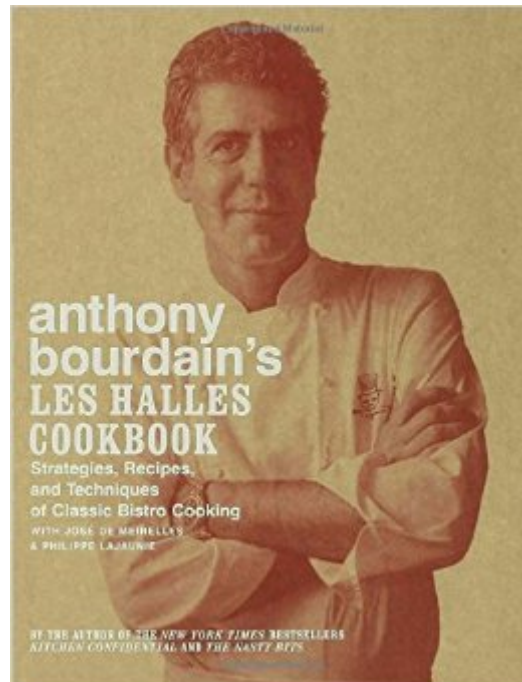


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# Anthony Bourdain's Les Halles Cookbook: Strategies, Recipes, And Techniques Of Classic Bistro Cooking



## Synopsis

Before stunning the world with his bestselling *Kitchen Confidential*, Anthony Bourdain spent years serving some of the best French brasserie food in New York. With its no-nonsense, down-to-earth atmosphere, Les Halles matched Bourdain's style perfectly: a restaurant where you can dress down, talk loudly, drink a little too much wine, and have a good time with friends. Now, Bourdain brings you his *Les Halles Cookbook*, a cookbook like no other: candid, funny, audacious, full of his signature charm and bravado. Bourdain teaches you everything you need to know to prepare classic French bistro fare. While you're being guided, in simple steps, through recipes like roasted veal short ribs and steak frites, escargots aux noix and foie gras au pruneaux, you'll feel like he's in the kitchen beside you-reeling off a few insults when you've scorched the sauce, and then patting you on the back for finally getting the steak tartare right. As practical as it is entertaining, Anthony Bourdain's *Les Halles Cookbook* is a can't-miss treat for cookbook lovers, aspiring chefs, and Bourdain fans everywhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Culinary bad boy Tony Bourdain and his Les Halles owner chefs have written a very, very good cookbook. If you have an ounce of interest in reading good cookbooks, stop reading this and go to the top of the page and order yourself a copy. If you are still here, I will tell you that this is an excellent cookbook: 1. Tony Bourdain is a very good writer. That means reading this book is very entertaining and worth the price even if you make none of the recipes. There are hundreds of good cookbooks, but Bourdain joins the very select rank, along with Alton Brown and Wayne Harley

Brachman of culinary writers who can have you laughing out loud. It also means that he knows how to put things so you understand them and remember them.<sup>2</sup> The book is all about demystifying classic Bistro cooking and in convincing you that with the right attitude and the right directions, you can do as well or better than any newbie professional cook entering Tony's kitchen to work for the first time. Bourdain lays out the reality of this cuisine in a way I have never seen before. If you ever had any reservations about whether you wanted to cook or had the aptitude to cook, this is the book for you.<sup>3</sup> The book presents excellent directions for doing most of the basic preparations for bistro dishes, with special emphasis on preparing stocks. I even think Tony sells himself short when he says that if a chef used his directions at one of Thomas Keller's restaurants, he would be fired on the spot. I personally find Bourdain's stockmaking recipes as good or better than any I have seen short of the CIA textbook. All the right steps are there and all the right culinary reasons for doing them are there.<sup>4</sup>

The target audience for this book is the dedicated home cook, or "foodie." The introduction, and the comments interspersed, which aim to simplify and demystify professional cuisine, are worth the price of the book: you can get recipes anywhere, but they don't come with the benefit of Anthony Bourdain's years of training and exploration (which wasn't a walk in the park; read *Kitchen Confidential* if you're curious about the underside). His passion makes the prose explode off the page. I actually read most of the Introduction out loud to my wife once, as I was finding it just too delicious not to share the humor and deep insight. I also had to give my first copy to my daughter (who, as a sous-chef at an Atlanta restaurant, is not in the target audience), but she can't get enough of "Uncle Tony"'s writing, either. The recipes spell out not only ingredients, but what tools are needed. Where else can you be instructed to make cotes du boeuf wearing "novelty apron or vintage Ted Nugent T-shirt," and to serve it with "an outrageously expensive Burgundy in cheap glasses to show [the guests] who's their Daddy"? All of the funky, sometimes ribald humor (you no like cusswords, you no buy da book, OK, paisan'?) serves to brand certain points into your brain (on using fresh herbs for poulet roti: "keep that dried trash away from my bird"). The emphasis on prep and mise en place, as applied to the home kitchen, will do most cooks a world of good. He makes it clear that by thinking through what you need and what you're going to do ahead of time, and then organizing everything, you reduce mistakes, speed up the process, let go of a ton of stress, and make better food. Resistance is futile.

I read B. Marold's amazing review below and immediately bought the book, it must be said. Tony

Bourdain's brilliant cookbook is brief history and bootcamp styled self-help. He truly helped me shine with my new in-laws with his book and wile away the hours in-flight. Went to Ireland to honeymoon with my in-laws on their dairy farm, an American gourmand alien to rural life. Ultimately brought this book with me to give to my Irish sister-in-law who's a fantastic cook. This book has both metric and English/American measurements and temperatures, which is a great help to all cooks stateside and abroad. Read the first chapter and fell in love with Tony Bourdain all over again, after avidly watching his "A Cook's Tour" series on FoodTV. It makes sense: the best chefs come from the poorest regions of the world. Why? They have to improvise with the 'scraps' made available to them and make the undesirable most delicious. That explains why some of my best dishes were made with paltry remains in the pantry days from payday or years away from real income. I offered to make my in-laws dinner one night with a recipe from the cookbook. Something basic and not frightfully exotic was the consensus. My intended feast: chicken basquaise. Feeding a family of five hungry adults in Ireland (or anywhere in the EU) is darned expensive. Lucked out at the local supermarket when eight pieces of chicken (thighs with bone and skin) were on sale, as all other options broke my budget. My wonderful, saintly mother-in-law regards cooking as drudgery and the kitchen reflects this sentiment. I regard cooking as essential therapy, All-Clad as instruments of mental health. I was shocked we spent over \$100 on two measly bags of food for the meal.

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