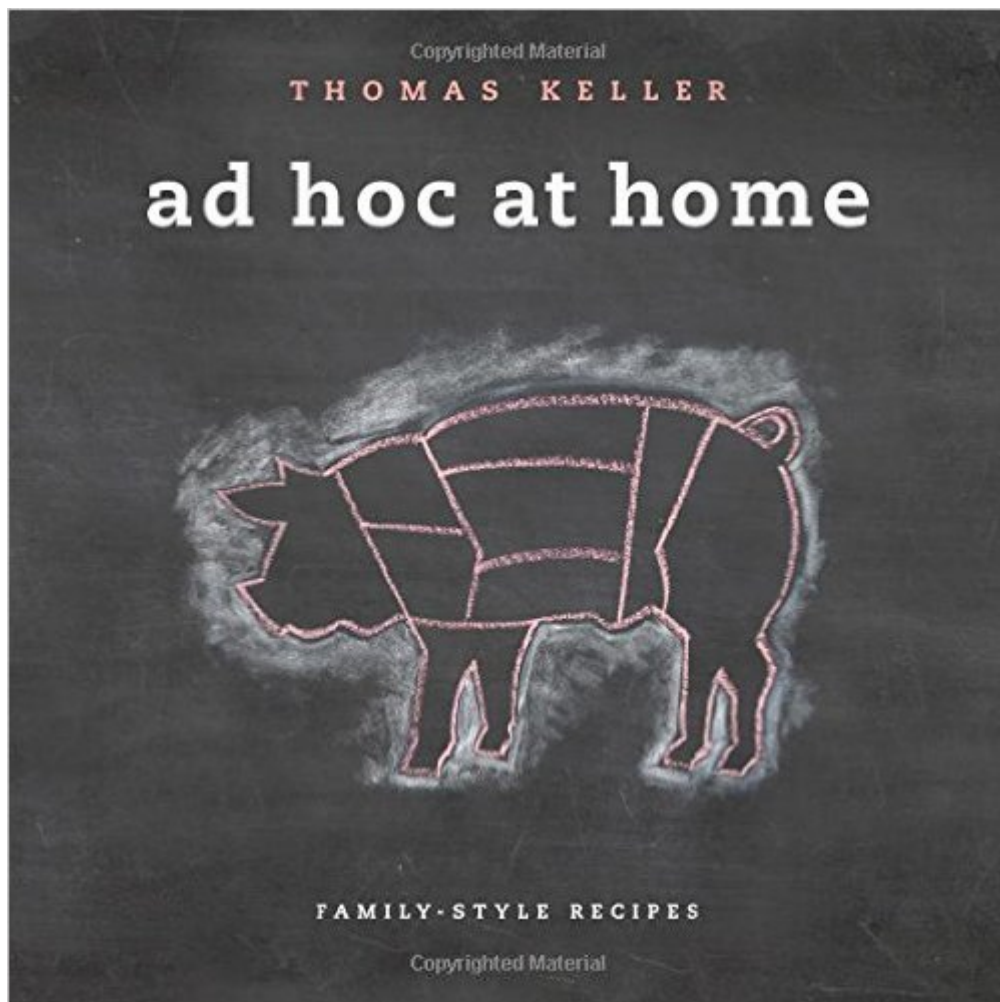


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Ad Hoc At Home



Synopsis

Thomas Keller shares family-style recipes that you can make any or every day. In the book every home cook has been waiting for, the revered Thomas Keller turns his imagination to the American comfort foods closest to his heart—flaky biscuits, chicken pot pies, New England clam bakes, and cherry pies so delicious and redolent of childhood that they give Proust's madeleines a run for their money. Keller, whose restaurants The French Laundry in Yountville, California, and Per Se in New York have revolutionized American haute cuisine, is equally adept at turning out simpler fare. In *Ad Hoc at Home*—a cookbook inspired by the menu of his casual restaurant Ad Hoc in Yountville—he showcases more than 200 recipes for family-style meals. This is Keller at his most playful, serving up such truck-stop classics as Potato Hash with Bacon and Melted Onions and grilled-cheese sandwiches, and heartier fare including beef Stroganoff and roasted spring leg of lamb. In fun, full-color photographs, the great chef gives step-by-step lessons in kitchen basics—here is Keller teaching how to perfectly shape a basic hamburger, truss a chicken, or dress a salad. Best of all, where Keller's previous best-selling cookbooks were for the ambitious advanced cook, *Ad Hoc at Home* is filled with quicker and easier recipes that will be embraced by both kitchen novices and more experienced cooks who want the ultimate recipes for American comfort-food classics.

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Customer Reviews

Although I've only had Thomas Keller's *ad hoc* for a short time, I really love it and have found many things that make it a must-buy if you're a lover of food or books about food. Keller's quote on the back of the book really sums up the theme of this book: "...a big collection of family meals and

everyday staples, delicious approachable food, recipes that are doable at home. No immersion circulator required. No complicated garnishes. I promise!"Keller delivers on this promise in *ad hoc*. The book assumes far less prerequisite knowledge than his other books, *The French Laundry*, *Bouchon*, and *Under Pressure*. In fact, the first section of the book is called "Becoming a better chef," and Keller outlines the techniques, ingredients, and tools that can help anyone become a better home cook. I own all 3 of Keller's other books, and regularly cook from them. This is, by far, the most accessible book for the casual home cook. The recipes in here can easily be made as weeknight meals--most don't require any excessive time demands or preparation. Many of the recipes are dishes you're probably familiar with: chicken pot pie, fried chicken, braised short ribs, beef stroganoff, apple fritters, chocolate brownies, etc. But, this being a Thomas Keller book, many of these classic dishes are refined and made more elegant. For example, his beef stroganoff uses fresh cremini mushrooms, creme fraiche, braised short ribs, and pappardelle pasta. All of the recipes I've made have turned out perfectly so far, which has been the case with his previous books. Consistent with his previous books, the look of *ad hoc* is beautiful. It's also a nice change to see Keller's fun side featured, and he's displayed in a number of whimsical photographs throughout the book, warning you: "shh..."

As Ruth Reichl recently said on *Fresh Air*, if it's four o'clock at work, and you're trying to decide what to have for dinner, you've already half-lost the battle. You can't start out from that position with most of the recipes in this book. What I'm trying to say is that these recipes take something most cookbooks and even television shows that are about food avoid: time and advanced planning. Most of the recipes contain sub-recipes. Most of the chicken and pork dishes require brining, and many dishes require some type of stock. However, most of the time consuming processes in the book don't require much active time, but they do require planning. I'm not putting this up as a negative. In fact, so many wonderful things about cooking simply require time. My first Thomas Keller cookbook was *Bouchon*, and some of the more time-consuming components used there (soffritto, tomato confit (in *Ad Hoc* oven roasted tomatoes), garlic confit, duck confit, preserved lemons, peeled shelled fava beans before blanching) make an appearance in this cookbook as well. The first reaction I had to cooking things for more than four hours, which some of these require in total time, was incredulity. Seriously? MORE than four hours? Having eaten at TK's restaurants I put my trust in him, and I learned how wonderful things happen when food is given time. If you've been cooking for many years some of the tips you may have known: put a towel under your cutting board, you only really need four knives, some salts weigh differently; however, others will most likely be new if

you haven't cooked out of TK's other cookbooks. Thinking back on the difficulties I had when I first started cooking, how I wish all of these things had been spelled out to me as clearly and as simply as they are in this book.

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