

A man with grey hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt and a dark blue apron, is smiling broadly in a kitchen. He is holding a knife and cutting a potato on a wooden cutting board. The kitchen has white subway tiles, a wooden countertop, and a stove in the background. There are various kitchen items on the shelves and counter, including a brass oil lamp and a bowl of eggs.

My Kind of Food

Recipes I Love to Cook at Home

John Torode



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headline

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About the Book

My Kind of Food is a very personal book from John, full of the food that he loves to cook and eat, recipes that he makes away from the cameras and professional kitchens.

In John's words:

'My world as I know it started with my Nanna's roasting tin, a chicken and a wooden spoon. The food she cooked was always simple, but delicious. Her cauliflower cheese was awesome, her caramel slice wonderful and I am still searching for a recipe to make her apple tea cake.

So life started simply for me. Since then I have cooked in professional kitchens, run my own restaurants and done a lot of telly. Some of you may have eaten in my restaurants, some may have seen me on MasterChef, but I guess that not many of you know what I really cook for myself and my friends and family.

This book is about how I cook at home and the chapters reflect me and the things in life I love – how I eat and how I cook. At its heart, it is simple, but it's definitely also influenced by my years in restaurant kitchens. I don't tend to define my food by type or style. I guess you could say that these are my real favourites – a behind-the-scenes look at my own kitchen!'

About the Author

John is one of the UK's best-known chefs and TV presenters. He is the host and judge of BBC1's top-rating MasterChef, Celebrity MasterChef and Junior MasterChef and presenter of A-Z of Cooking on BBC2.

John went back to his roots with a culinary road trip across Australia for his series John Torode's Australia, which was the top-performing show of 2014 on the Good Food channel, with a 70% above slot average and which has also just aired on Watch. A popular TV personality, much sought after by many shows, John has also hosted Have I Got News For You and Saturday Kitchen, and has made numerous guest appearances on BBC Breakfast, Loose Women, Alan Carr, The Alan Titchmarsh Show and National Lottery Stars. John also writes regularly for Good Food, Olive, Waitrose Magazine, Good Housekeeping, Red and Delicious and he appears at all the annual BBC Good Food Shows. John is in great demand for all the regional food festivals, where his cookery demos are sell-outs.

Acknowledgements



Over the past 12 months I have had a ball writing and cooking for this book, but of course, no man is an island and the only way a book like this comes together is because a caring team of wonderful people gets stuck in and makes it happen.

My thanks are in no particular order... (Maybe in order of appearance?)

Jo Carlton, thank you for continuing to believe in me, for pushing the boundaries and listening to me when I rant. I know it's not often but I do rant.

Jonathan Conway, for putting 'the deal' together: you are very clever and a really nice bloke. Thanks.

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Cynthia Inions, a stylist who is indispensable. Thank you for working so hard and making the ordinary extraordinary for taking my few things and making it my book. You are brilliant. See you soon.

Thanks to Mark Harper, a great chum and a man of calm and persistence. You slapped my smile all over this beautiful book and it looks and feels just the way I wanted it to.

Pictures of food don't just appear and I have to give a big hug and thanks to Lizzie Kamenetzky and Poppy Mahon for working in my little kitchen and taking my food and ideas to the place they belong, on the pages of this book for all to be inspired by. I couldn't have done it without you.

If I could spell and write I would still ask for Imogen Fortes to edit my future books. Thank you for your patience, your attention to detail and for allowing me to use my words. What a joy.

Every team needs a captain and my captain is Muna Reyal. I bow to you. Your belief and trust has made this all

possible.

And thank you to the rest of the Headline team, particularly Elizabeth Masters and Viviane Basset for getting My Kind of Food out there and spreading the word.

That's it until next time. Thank you for taking the time to read my book.

Dedicated to my children – Marcel, Casper, Jonah and
Loulou



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Introduction

This book, *My Kind Of Food*, is a document of my life in food, and of my travels and my loves.

Why did I decide to write it? Because cooking is what I do and what I have always done. I do it professionally and it is my way of life, but cooking is also the way I relax. It is the thing I dream about the most; it makes me smile and it is something that I am proud to be able to do well. Yes, I am a judge on *MasterChef*, where I taste thousands of dishes, and yes, I am a trained chef, which has had me commanding some of the biggest brigades a kitchen has ever seen. Yes, I have travelled the world and cooked on TV and at food shows up and down the country, but in my heart I am a home cook. I do most of my cooking at home – for my friends and family and for me, so this is a collection of those recipes. It is the food I love, that I cook all the time, and it is a book full of recipes that have a story, a soul and a reason.

I also wanted you to know me and what my kind of food actually is. It's not a single style – French, Asian, Australasian or British – it's not modern, old-fashioned or classic; it's a mix of all these things. And at its core is a boy who loved to cook with his Nanna.

The food I had as a child was not complicated but by heck was tasty. I have been very lucky to have eaten in some of the most amazing places and restaurants in the world, but

the food I ate as a boy – my Nanna's home cooking – stand firmly in my heart as some of the best I have ever tasted. I still make the roast chicken that I learned to cook with her and it sits proudly among these pages, along with many other childhood favourites, such as my dad's lamb fritters. And as I have grown up I have also discovered new worlds of flavour of spice, opulence and indulgence, and those recipes are here too.

I want the book to reflect the way we live today, not some fairytale kitchen with helpers and washer-uppers and gismo and gadgets. These recipes are for everyday kitchens like yours and mine. You won't need lots of equipment: a few pots and pans, a large casserole (I love my Le Creuset!), a sharp knife and a big substantial wooden chopping board will see you through most of the recipes.

The chapters, too, mirror how I cook. Sometimes I wear shorts; some days I wear wellies (sometimes together!) Often I have to wear a suit and sometimes I don't; my food is simply me – variable. First and foremost, I absolutely love breakfast. I love it at any time of the day but on a weekend, when I get a chance to sleep in, my Aussie roots come to the fore and I cook brunch. It's more than a meal to me, it reminds me of Australia, so I have dedicated a whole chapter to my favourite breakfast and brunch recipes.

Everything in this book has been cooked many, many times over – in my own kitchen, for my family and friends. I have done all the hard work and played with the dishes to make them as easy as possible. There is a big chapter on meals for the family that absolutely sums this up. It's full of feasts for hungry crowds and pots of deliciousness that will make enough so that some can be frozen and pulled out in case

of a culinary emergency. And we all have those! My children are a great barometer of what is good so all their favourites are in here too.

There's also a chapter for when you haven't got much time. It's for when the shopping has been done and you're at home but with very little time to get a meal together. As a parent, I know that having to do baths, read books and help with homework as well as get food on the table can be stressful, so I hope this chapter will take a bit of the pressure off, or just help those of you that get home late and need dinner fast and without fuss.

Sometimes I have time, sometimes I am in a rush, and sometimes I forget things – doing the shopping, for example. Like all people I am busy and at times I get home and haven't had a chance to get to the shops, but the kids still need feeding, so there is a chapter that makes use of what's likely to be found lurking in my fridge/store cupboard/freezer. I don't need food to be posh every day, it just needs to be tasty. And because where I'm from we also spend loads of time eating outdoors, there's a whole chapter of recipes you can cook on the barbie, or that are designed for eating when the sun shines (with contingency plans for how to cook the dishes indoors too – I've lived in the UK long enough to know from experience that we can't rely on the British weather).

For the adventurer and the conquering cook, I have also included 'Leave Overnight', a short chapter dedicated to those who have the time and are happy to do some prep work in order to cook up a storm.

Finally, of course, there is a puds section too, and these range from a basic custard, a steamed pudding and

popcorn, to upside-down cakes and jam doughnuts, which are one of my favourite things in the world, and to die for.

As a chef I have never wanted stars or hats or rosettes, all I have wanted is for the people I cook for to smile and say 'That's delicious'; 'Is there any more?'; 'Thanks Papa'; or 'Can you show me how to make it?' And that's where this book comes in. I want you to feel at ease about cooking everything, almost as if I were there showing you how to do it. Though please use my recipes as you will. If you're a seasoned cook, you don't have to follow them exactly, perhaps just use them for inspiration, but for the beginner I hope that I can hold your hand and help you cook with confidence.

Cooking should not be a chore and it certainly shouldn't be daunting. It's a time for you to let go, and get lost in the sights and smells that nature has gifted us.

So my parting word is get that pot in the oven, pour yourself a glass of wine and enjoy the smells that will flood your kitchen as you chat through your day with those you love. Cooking is a joy and I really hope you find yours in my book.

Cook's notes

All butter is salted unless otherwise stated.

All eggs are medium unless otherwise stated.

All milk is full-fat unless otherwise stated.

All sugar is granulated unless otherwise stated.

Tomato sauce means ketchup (it's an Aussie thing)!

Thick yoghurt means you can choose the type you like – I like mine full-fat and rich.

Where a recipe calls for dark chocolate, I've only specified the percentage of cocoa solids if the recipe really needs a particularly high percentage. Chocolate can be pricey so I'll leave the choices up to you.

All oven temperatures are for a conventional oven. If you are using a fan oven,

reduce the temperature by 20°C.

John





brunch to lunch

The Aussie in me is all about eating through the morning. My perfect day starts slowly – if breakfast is the meal of kings, then brunch is the food of emperors.

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