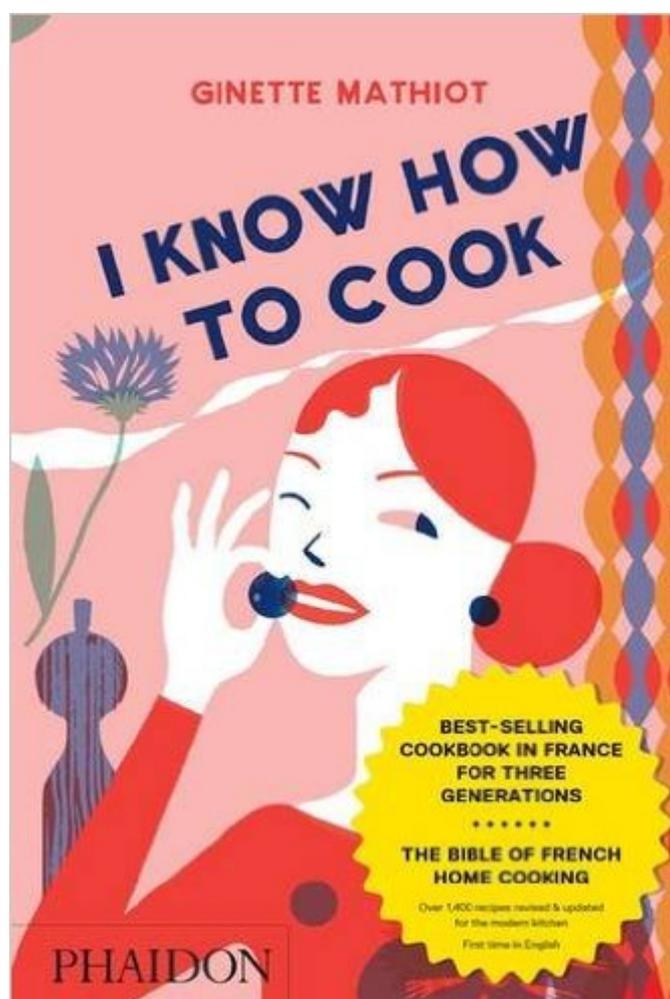


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I Know How To Cook



Synopsis

The bible of French home cooking, *Je Sais Cuisiner*, has sold over 6 million copies since it was first published in 1932. It is a household must-have, and a well-thumbed copy can be found in kitchens throughout France. Its author, Ginette Mathiot, published more than 30 recipe books in her lifetime, and this is her magnum opus. It's now available for the first time in English as *I Know How to Cook*. With more than 1,400 easy-to-follow recipes for every occasion, it is an authoritative compendium of every classic French dish, from croque monsieur to cassoulet. Clear, practical and comprehensive, it is an essential guide to the best home cooking in the world: no cuisine is better than French at bringing the very best out of ingredients to create simple, comforting and delicious dishes. The recipes have been carefully updated by a team of editors led by Parisian food writer Clotilde Dusoulier, to suit modern readers and their kitchens, while preserving the integrity of the original book. The great reputation of *I Know How to Cook* has been built over three generations by the fact that it is a genuine cookbook: each recipe has been cooked many times, and because it is used by domestic cooks rather than chefs. And with its breadth of recipes and knowledge of techniques, *I Know How to Cook* doesn't just teach you how to cook French, it teaches you how to cook, period. In the tradition of Phaidon's other culinary bibles, *The Silver Spoon*, *1080 Recipes* and *Vefa's Kitchen*, *I Know How to Cook* offers menus by celebrated French bistro chefs at the end of the book, including recipes by Daniel Boulud and Francois Payard.

Book Information

Hardcover: 976 pages

Publisher: Phaidon Press; US ed edition (September 24, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 071485736X

ISBN-13: 978-0714857367

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 3.2 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (53 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #178,421 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #173 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > French](#) #17866 in [Books > Teens](#)

Customer Reviews

My jaw hit the floor when I saw this book. I have the French version and I had no idea that Phaidon was working on one of their now-classic spruced-up translations. If nothing else, Phaidon has the

cookbook thing down by now -- this is a typically beautiful cookbook, with stunning photography and illustrations derived from the blocky line art typical of books from the 50s and 60s. The original book is certainly not a learner's book; if anything it's more of a complement to something like *Mastering The Art of French Cooking*, to be used as a reference after working through the more technique-oriented books. Comparisons to *Joy of Cooking* are apt; while very few books on the market are quite as ambitious as *Joy* (which has a level of information density that is intimidating even by most professional standards), Mathiot certainly cast her net wide for traditional French cooking, even adding a few foreign recipes (one situation where the book sadly underachieves). This book does take some liberties, fleshing out some of the recipes for overseas audiences and adding the now-traditional selection of specialties from overseas French chefs (including, among others, Daniel Boulud, but sadly fewer other A-listers than you'd expect).

Last July, the *Washington Post* excerpted a recipe from Ginette Mathiot's French classic and, in the covering article, compared it a French "Joy of Cooking" and compared it the books of Julia Child. On the strength of that article, I ordered the book, and my copy arrived yesterday. I am going to enjoy cooking from it. It is a classic of great depth and we can be thankful to Phaidon for publishing this huge volume. And yet, in my opinion, it is not quite what the Post article touted it to be. It lacks the extraordinary technical precision of Julia Child and "Joy of Cooking." Nor, do I think that, as an introduction to cooking technique, it can be compared to Madeleine Kamman's "New Making of a Cook." The closest American comparison I would make to it is the classic "American Woman's Cookbook," which was my mother's cooking bible and the cook book I first learned to cook from. As a collection of recipes, the Mathiot book deserves a place of honor in the kitchen. Yet the book suffers from some odd editorial shortcomings. As a translation from the French, ingredients are given in equivalent U.S. measurements (mostly by weight); but straight metric conversions lead to odd amounts in the ingredients columns. For example, one recipe calls for 4 1/4 ounces of bacon, 9 ounces of chestnuts, and 1 1/4 cups of Madeira. Readers would have been better served by a list of the original metric amounts and a parallel column that recalculates the recipe in more standard U.S. measures--as for example the U.S. editor of Elizabeth David's books has done with her British measures. Secondly, there is no French-to-English glossary; and, in some cases, trying to find a technique known by a French name is hopeless. Where is "poele," for example?

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