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101 super-quick and ultra-easy recipes for each of the four seasons--totaling a whopping 404 recipes--from award-winning cookbook author and popular *New York Times* columnist Mark Bittman.

- A celebrated author with a huge following: The author of the perennial bestseller *How to Cook Everything*, mark Bittman is known across the country as "The minimalist." His more than two million readers eagerly follow his weekly recipes and accompanying instructional online videos from *The New York Times*. His popular thirteen-part PBS series was named the Best National Cooking Series of 2005 by the prestigious James Beard Foundation.

- An easy, breezy read for busy cooks: 404 Express gives readers 101 quick recipes for each season, all of which can be prepared in ten minutes or less. For people who like to eat well without the fuss, mark Bittman offers his trademark pared-down elegance and contemporary style. Like his New York Times column, each recipe is presented with just a sentence or two and requires but a few ingredients. From seafood to pasta dishes, vegetarian specialties and desserts, Bittman covers every flavor for every season.

- Capitalizes on the "seasonal" food craze: With concerns about the environment, today more than ever, Americans are keen on cooking and eating seasonally. Each of the 404 recipes in this book make it easy for readers to choose meals made from fresh foods produced on local farms.

Mark Bittman's Kitchen Express: 404 Inspired Seasonal Dishes You Can Make in 20 Minutes or Less Details

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From Reader Review Mark Bittman's Kitchen Express: 404 Inspired Seasonal Dishes You Can Make in 20 Minutes or Less for online ebook

Jennifer says

What's not to love about Mark Bittman? This cookbook is formatted completely different from another one I have from him. I am a list girl and really like to see ingredients listed, which this book does not do. Mark has the ingredients only in the same paragraph he tells you how to make the recipe. It literally is a paragraph a recipe. I really like how he has sectioned recipes by season and of the recipes I've made so far they are all very quick and delicious. Another winner!

Amy Beth says

I enjoyed this cookbook and every recipe I tried turned out great. That said, it isn't a cookbook for just anybody. I don't think if you are looking for your first cookbook that you would want this one. It seems to assume that you at least know your way AROUND the kitchen, not just know your way TO the kitchen. Bittman even says in the opening bits that the book assumes you are an "enthusiastic cook." There are no pictures and the recipes aren't exactly recipes with exact measurements, etc. The instructions are in paragraph form. You'll need to read the opening to understand the instructions better. He explains how to stock a pantry, lists some handy substitutions (such as yogurt for sour cream), and has an explanation on how to use the book.

Also, a note about the recipes. I wouldn't call the recipes strange or even unfamiliar, but some might. I guess it might depend a lot on how and where you were raised or what sort of cook you are. Here are some of the recipes: Garlic-Ginger Shrimp, Cauliflower Soup, Jerk Chicken, Korean Barbecued Beef, Braised Fish with Zucchini, Panzanella, Chicken Curry in a Hurry, Crisp Fennel Gratin, Classic Caesar Salad, Migas, Almond Tart, etc. But fellow Southerners, if you're looking for things like mac and cheese, fried pork chops, chow chow, and Red Velvet Cake, look elsewhere. ;)

Edited to add: It took me longer than 20 minutes usually to make the dishes I tried. He explains why that is in the opening part too and it makes sense. It took me on average about 30 minutes. Still, not bad.

Mary says

This is one of those cookbooks I pulled off the library shelf randomly while my kids were being kids and putting us in danger of being asked to leave the library. When I started to flip through it in the waiting room of a doctor's office later in the day I knew I'd made a lucky grab, because in spite of my long, hot day of dragging unhappy kids on errands I really wanted to go home and cook some the food in this book. Now, several weeks, and several very successful meals later, I'm on my last possible renewal and have to buy my own copy. Everything is easy to prepare, without intimidating ingredient lists, and all of it has been delicious so far.

Christie Martel says

Mark Bittman is my hero! We only got this cookbook in February so we haven't tried a ton of recipes from it but we're about 5/5 or 6/6 already. I love the fact that it is separated out by season and you can find recipes that are specific to your season using only in-season ingredients. I was a little put out at first by the lack of an ingredient list for the recipes. I didn't know how much spice to add or how many chicken breasts to cook. But then I realised that this is the true beauty of this cookbook. I can adjust the recipes to serve 2 people or 20 people. And I am truly learning to use my palate to determine what tastes good and what doesn't. I'm not constantly wondering if this is how something is supposed to taste, I'm just noticing if I like the taste or not. Love this book!

Laila (BigReadingLife) says

This is my husband's favorite cookbook (I'm getting him this for Christmas, actually), and one of mine as well. The recipes are all made with fresh, easy-to-find ingredients. Anyone with just a little bit of kitchen know-how can cook them, and they're quick too! Nothing processed or out of a box - just good flavorful food. Lots of vegetarian options, all types of meat dishes, as well as desserts and drinks. I *highly* recommend this cookbook.

rachel says

I've only made one recipe from this book, back when it was first released in 2009 and I was barely a year out of college, thinking about leaving my parents' house but totally unprepared to do so in a "having practical adult skills" kind of way.

I was house-sitting for a relative for a night and didn't want the typical pizza/Chinese/fast food options, so I photocopied a recipe from this book at work (yes, seriously) and took it home. The recipe I made was some kind of fish with jalapeno lime butter on it. Really good (and hard to remember exact specifics without the book in front of me, just that there were limes and fish and hot peppers involved and it was easy and yummy). It was also probably the first meal I had made, really, that was more complicated than grilled cheese or spaghetti. Surprisingly, it was not the last! Yep, I am pretty sure this is the book that made me love cooking.

The great thing about this book is that recipes are written in paragraph format with vague "pinch of this, dash of that" instructions that encourage you to experiment with your cooking and taste your food as you go along, rather than just putting together everything based on numbers in front of you. This would annoy exacting people, for sure. But the neat thing is, with this style of writing you don't just learn how to make one dish whenever you have that particular recipe in front of you. You learn how the techniques can be applied to all sorts of similar types of food. You learn that you have to taste your food as you go along. Basically, you just learn how to *cook*.

Judy says

I'm biased. I love Mark Bittman's recipes - they are simple, easy to understand, and delicious. Perhaps best of all, he provides plenty of room for improvisation. This book is the epitome of leaving room for the chef's tastes and flavors to emerge. He basically gives just the gist of the recipe. It's fine as is, but there's room for addition/subtraction. The recipes are very brief - there are 2 - 3 per page.

Here's one called *Broccoli Rabe and Garlic Soup*: In a 450 degree oven, roast a handful of smashed garlic cloves with a little olive oil for about 5 minutes (*I roasted them for 8 minutes*). Bring about 6 cups of stock to a boil; add the garlic, stir in about a half cup of orzo or other small pasta, and a bunch of chopped broccoli rabe; continue cooking until the pasta and rabe are tender. Add lemon juice to taste, along with some salt and pepper. Serve, garnished with freshly grated parmesan cheese if you like.

Experience Life says

The fabulous new book from the bestselling author of *How to Cook Everything* could just as easily be called "How to Cook Everything, Fast." Bittman groups his 404 recipes by season and points out that he chops slower than anyone he knows, so when he says you can get these dishes on the table in 20 minutes, he's not exaggerating.

His "kitchen express" style is about three things: speed, flexibility and relaxation, so there aren't many ingredients and he doesn't expect you to measure them precisely. Their flavor relies on quality: in-season fresh vegetables, well-chosen oils and condiments, and good proteins like beans, tofu and sustainably raised meats. Together, these dishes — ranging from crab cakes to spicy greens with croutons and eggs to pan-fried herb chicken — serve up a double helping of flavor and nutrition, and prove that these bases can be covered fast, without fuss. Bittman also provides some handy lists: quick-cooking standbys for the cupboard, fridge and freezer; several dishes that double as quick appetizers; and a collection of various seasonal sample menus so you're ready for anything on the fly, from a weeknight dinner party to a holiday blowout. A great tool to help you cook smarter, not harder, and eat healthier as a result.

Jeesun Hunting says

I got this book because I love the *Minimalist* columns. It is written in the same way as the column (lots of room for improvising, simple ingredients, no-nonsense instructions) but I found it a little disappointing because most recipes are meat centered. I was hoping for a book that could provide quick weekday meals but it didn't really suit a flexitarian/on a budget diet. I was surprised because Bittman is a big proponent of "part-time vegetarianism".

Sarah says

I love this book because on my bookshelf of ridiculously intensive recipe books, this makes my life easy. This is all about buying fresh, in-season ingredients and cooking them simply. It is a great, weeknight meal planner. Because frankly, there are some nights that I don't want to spend an hour in the kitchen. I want to

eat. Now. One caveat is that you really should know how to cook before you buy this. It is not going to teach you techniques or give you step-by-step advice. But if you are even moderately talented in the kitchen I would suggest this to add to your collection. Also great for someone (like me) who was looking to cut down on their meat intake, but not go full-on veggie.

Laura says

I checked this out from the library to see if it is something to give my sister-in-law for Christmas. It's excellent! So much so, I'm ordering a copy for myself. The four to five sentence recipes are perfect for quick, throw-together meals. Mark Bittman's recipes have never steered me wrong, whether they come from his Minimalist pieces in NYT or "How To Cook Everything Vegetarian". He's excellent.

Julie says

My husband brought home this book a few weeks ago, and we have been using it regularly since. It's basically my new favorite cookbook, and I cook from it almost every time it's my turn to make dinner.

Why?

1. The recipes are creative and sometimes surprising, and always good.
2. You really can make these recipes in about 20 minutes, if you have the right ingredients on hand.
3. Bittman begins this book by telling you how to stock your pantry so that you will have the right ingredients on hand.
4. The book is organized by season, so you can quickly figure out how to cook with foods that will be in season (and therefore, are more likely to have been produced locally or at least regionally) and can more easily find ingredients in the stores.

So those are my top reasons. And as for #1, I should say that my husband is intractably picky and something of a food snob. And yet without fail, he likes the the recipes, too. This has been the main problem for us with cookbooks that promise speedy prep: they almost always take shortcuts in ways that substantially reduce the quality of the final product. Bittman doesn't take shortcuts. He just strips down the recipes to their bare bones, reducing significantly the prepping and cooking times. And he only includes recipes that can handle this kind of stripping.

But I have one more reason -- and this will appeal to those who, like me, are kitchen-stupid.

5. The recipes will teach you about how food works. Because these are stripped-down recipes, you discover what, underneath all the other added flavors and components, are the most basic elements to making a dish work. If you can only use 5 ingredients, which are the required ones? These recipes get right to that core of flavor combinations and basic recipe structure. Bittman doesn't talk about his recipes in this way, as he does in his other books, but you'll see it really quickly when you begin cooking.

Some (potential) drawbacks:

-- Not many vegetarian main dishes. There are plenty of meat-free recipes here, but most aren't substantial enough to be a meal in themselves, and since we tend to cook one-dish meals, that means we are only using

this cookbook on days when my vegetarian daughter isn't eating with us.

-- Recipes are laid out in short text paragraphs -- as opposed to the normal cookbook technique of listing ingredients first, then explaining preparation steps in a sequence of numbered paragraphs. Instead, Bittman just writes about 4-5 sentences about how to whip up the recipe. You have to read the paragraph to figure out what ingredients you need to gather. But in reality, I haven't minded this so much. Reading through the whole paragraph at once helps you figure out what you're going to be doing, and enables you to plan your prep time more quickly.

As busy working parents, my partner and I are super grateful for a reliably delicious express cookbook. Thanks, Mark!

Ben says

Recipes distilled to their essence: this is good to eat; here's how to make it. I am the biggest Mark Bittman fanboy, and I'm not ashamed to admit it.

Black Heart Magazine says

Love the way these are broken down by season. This is a bit of a weird cookbook, though, as it's mostly about combining the same types of ingredients over and over in different ways. Bittman is a minimalist, so it's about having the kitchen stocked and ready to go, and then just mixing and matching flavors. So the "recipes" aren't very involved, and it takes a bit more work to get your kitchen set up to do these in 20 minutes or less, but it's an interesting way to do things. Plus it'll help you start trusting your instincts more, which is always a good way to be in the kitchen. Recommended for anyone looking for interesting new recipes that can be cooked in even the crummiest, tiniest of NYC apartment kitchens.

Spike says

A cook book for people who cook. This is not a book of recipes, so much as a book of ideas. Most of the recipes are in the form of "Sauté some onions in butter, add some mushroom, and ham, when cooked season to taste." . Measurements are only given when something is to be baked.

This is the book to reach for when the question is "What do I should I make for dinner?", not "How do I make this?".
