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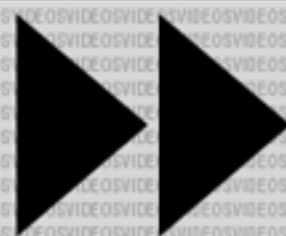
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Bite Me: The Man-Friendly Cookbook

Author: William Stodalka

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What do you use a cookbook for? Is it just a tool to provide recipes to make food? Or is it something you read, possibly for pleasure? Your answer to this will determine whether or not this is a book for you.



Let's talk about the recipes first, if that's what it is you're looking for. This book wasn't meant for advanced chefs – it's got recipes that most people can pull off, even those with as pitifully meagre culinary experience as myself. I tried out two of them, both with mostly good results. The first was a Bolognese – Smothered Parmesan Polenta. The sauce had a good tomatoey flavour, but the polenta put me off. That may not be the recipe's fault, however, because among the things I learned from this cookbook, I discovered that I don't like polenta.

The other recipe, Balsamic Chicken with Sweet Peppers, was better (and not just because it didn't feature polenta). It was tasty, with a delicious crispy breaded crust that made a perfect contrast to the tangy sweet peppers. *Bite Me* is an easy read, even for those of us without much knowledge of food slang, and has the right amount of personal anecdotes, humour, and good photography to make it entertaining. For example, I learned that the author, unlike myself, loves polenta – she ate 22 servings in 17 days. Although this didn't help me, because I don't like polenta. A good anecdote can't make food taste any better. I guess for me, a cookbook is a tool, not an experience.

Cooking, I've found, is not so much about the recipes, but about the cook who's making them. If you're a cook who sees it a cookbook as a tool, this one's got some decent recipes and enough variety to make itself a good addition to your library. But if you're the type of cook who's looking to chuckle at statements like this one about potatoes, "We challenge any dastardly critic of the poor, maligned tuber to refuse this decadent spud" while trying out new recipes, pick up this book.