

# THE BEST BOOKS (SO FAR) OF 2023

For thrill-seekers, skill-seekers and everyone in between

## MOTHER TONGUE

by *Gurdeep Loyal*

Rising star Gurdeep is a second-generation British Indian of Punjabi heritage exploring what he refers to as the “multi-faceted cultural hybridity” of his upbringing and the cooking of the Indian diaspora in the UK. The recipes, based on tried-and-true spice combinations, are a glorious cross-cultural mash-up of colour, taste and texture. A mould-breaking debut cookbook.

**BEST FOR** Spice lovers  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Achaari mango pulled pork

## POMEGRANATES & ARTICHOKEs

by *Saghar Setareh*

Born in Tehran and based in Rome, Saghar is a cookery teacher, food blogger and photographer. Over three sections – covering Iran, Italy and ‘In Between’ (the Levant and Eastern Med) – she investigates the idea of migration: of ingredients, recipes and stories. Beautifully photographed and written, this is a book about identity as much

as food, with recipes that radiate generosity and warmth.

**BEST FOR** Stovetop travellers  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Pasta & chickpea soup

## THE FLAVOUR THESAURUS: MORE FLAVOURS

by *Niki Segnit*  
The much-anticipated sequel to Niki’s ground-breaking *The Flavour Thesaurus* (a compendium of ingredients and flavour pairings published in 2010) is finally here. Like its forerunner, this collection of mini-recipes and pairings (some obvious, some less so) homes in on plant-based ingredients. Broad-ranging and skilfully compiled, it’s essential reading for keen cooks everywhere.

**BEST FOR** Kitchen experimenters  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Butter beans with sultanas

## RICE TABLE

by *Su Scott*  
Born in South Korea, Su has called London home for most of her adult life. She came to food writing after her daughter was born, as a way of reconnecting

with her own mother – and creating an edible bridge between generations and cultures. The resulting recipes are infused with Korean flavours but achievable for those less familiar with this cuisine. These are dishes you’ll make on repeat.

**BEST FOR** Creative home cooks  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Soy sauce beef with jammy egg

## THE ART OF FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER

by *Eleanor Steafel*

A book with a simple, wonderful premise: to celebrate Friday nights through an intimate and original collection of recipes and essays. It’s not just Eleanor’s food that appeals, but her entire attitude to friends and cooking – a wonderful mixture of practicality, fun, generosity and wit. Whether there’s a crowd of people to please as the weekend arrives or no one but yourself, this book answers the call.

**BEST FOR** Homebody cooks  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Party potatoes with zaatar salt and soured cream and onion dip

## THE PEPPERPOT DIARIES

by *Andi Oliver*

“The Caribbean is not just one place, it is many places, many stories, many people,” Andi writes in her debut book, where she beautifully explores the region’s wealth of flavour alongside its culture and identity. Like the author, Andi’s cooking is vibrant and contagiously joyful. She serves up uncomplicated, homey recipes, but with plenty of creative opportunity for more adventurous cooks.

**BEST FOR** Culinary explorers  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Wadadli Kitchen spiced roast chicken with coconut gravy

## THE DIY BBQ COOK BOOK

by *James Whetlor*

Ex-chef James really knows his embers. As the ‘DIY’ in the title suggests, there are instructions here for handy types to craft their own barbecue from breeze blocks, oil drums and the like, but the building element is not essential:





most recipes can be cooked on any grill. The globally inspired dishes are enough to convince anyone to step away from the usual burgers and ribs into more intrepid territory.

**BEST FOR** Fire tamers  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Xinjiang lamb breast skewers

### SWEET ENOUGH

by Alison Roman  
 This refreshingly simple collection of desserts and savoury bakes feels both impressive and doable. Alison

prioritises enjoyment rather than the pursuit of perfection, with zippy conversations throughout the book, straightforward advice for the baking-averse and options to fancify almost every recipe.

**BEST FOR** Pleasure seekers  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Salted lemon cream pie

### COMFORT & JOY

by Ravinder Bhogal  
 Chef, restaurateur and food writer Ravinder is known for cooking that crosses country and cultural

boundaries, combining ingredients in clever, palate-pleasing ways. This book follows in that vein, but this time the focus is squarely on vegetarian dishes. Her recipes “lavish plants with... care, culinary sorcery, creativity and surprise”. Roots, shoots, pulses and leaves are transformed into things of beauty – from dips and dals to noodles, stews and puddings.

**BEST FOR** Plant-based pursuits  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Watermelon salad with pepper and cashew-nut brittle

**HONEY** by Amy Newsome  
 More than a cookbook, this is an insightful foray into the craft of beekeeping and honey by a writer, gardener, beekeeper and cook. Sweet and savoury recipes take a pollen-to-plate approach, exploring honeys and their complex flavours. From bee-friendly gardening to advice on fermenting, Amy uncovers the potential in these sweet pots of gold.

**BEST FOR** Curious cooks  
**MUST TRY RECIPE** Honey on toast ice cream