



# Pen & Palate: Mastering the Art of Adulthood, with Recipes

*Lucy Madison , Tram Nguyen*

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From the writers of acclaimed blog *Pen & Palate*, a humorous coming-of-age (and mastering-the-art-of-home-cooking) memoir of friendship, told through stories, recipes, and beautiful illustrations.

Getting through life in your twenties isn't easy--especially if you're broke, awkward, and prone to starting small grease fires in your studio apartment. For best friends Lucy Madison and Tram Nguyen, cooking was an escape from the daily humiliation that is being a twenty-something woman in a big city. PEN & PALATE traces the course of Lucy and Tram's devoted friendship through miserable jobs and tiny apartments, first loves and ill-advised flings, successes and setbacks--always with a shared love of food at the center of the narrative. A modern take on Laurie Colwin's classic *Home Cooking*, this coming-of-age memoir for the *Girls* set weaves together comical (mis)adventures and recipes meant to be shared with a best friend and a bottle of wine.

## **Pen & Palate: Mastering the Art of Adulthood, with Recipes Details**

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Author : Lucy Madison , Tram Nguyen

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## **From Reader Review Pen & Palate: Mastering the Art of Adulthood, with Recipes for online ebook**

### **Tenley says**

In the arbitrary world of book reviews, some books get 5 stars because they're important, some get 3 because the reader didn't like the genre, and some get 5 because the prose sings. This book gets five stars because it was exactly what I needed to read. After a summer of reading my way through a couple of science-themed books, taking a quick dive into the friendship of Lucy and Tram was perfect. Maybe because they're just a few years removed from me, so their experiences seem familiar and still important to my 21 years. Maybe because the stories they tell are personal and narrative and funny. Maybe because the food that they create is ambitious and as far from the depressing cook-in-college articles I've found online ("How to use a knife!" "Ten things to add to ramen!") Maybe because of the beautiful I-wish-I-had-thought-of-that color illustrations. (I mean, how many books do adults get with COLOR illustrations? Not enough. Not nearly enough.)

It's a quick read, with thoughts on growing up and the way food links us to each other and to our past, and now I'm inspired to make ambitious food in my tiny dorm room kitchen.

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### **Grace says**

I love love love a cook book that tells a good story! Beautifully illustrated, with explanations and preambles to the recipes, this is a lovely story about friendship, growing up, and recipes that mean something.

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### **Emrie says**

I was a little disappointed that the recipes in the book were so much more advanced than I had assumed. I was kind of hoping for two girls struggling to learn how to feed themselves with no experience. However! Their struggles to live in a clean, decent apartment, their search for a career and a passion, even some of their zanier stories were totally relatable. It was a nice read :)

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### **Sara says**

Pen and Palate has some great thoughts on what food means and how it factors into both everyday life and special occasions, as well as some fantastic recipes. Unfortunately, the narrative sections of the book are trying to sum up some kind of lesson on adulthood, but not really getting there. The dueling narratives meant than neither writer is able to really develop their themes and relationships. An interesting but flawed concept.

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\*\*I received an ARC from the publisher via Edelweiss. All opinions are my own.\*\*

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### **Amyleigh says**

I've come to realize that one of my dreams is that I will one day discover myself by following in the footsteps of a narrative along the lines of Julie and Julia, cooking my way to a brighter self. Food will mirror my struggles and sorrows; I will be saved by learning to bake the perfect souffle. This book was another one of those stories that my sappy drip of a heart finds so endearing. And now to spend the new year trying to make this dream happen.

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### **Georgia says**

Four stars for how interesting these two women are

Three stars for the randomness of the structure- the recipes at the end of chapters didn't always seem logical or relevant, and the narrative jumps weren't always smooth.

Enjoyable overall though.

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### **Mysteryfan says**

This is a very cute memoir about two best friends in their twenties struggling to establish careers and personal lives. They alternate chapters in writing about their lives. Each chapter ends with a couple of recipes. There are beautiful food illustrations by one of the authors. It's a fun frivolous read.

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### **Rebecca says**

An enjoyable story about two friends growing up, discovering interests, working toward goals, and falling in love--with some delicious family recipes to sweeten the story. I made the chocolate chip cookies while reading through and recommend them even more than the book.

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### **MsNxnxtx says**

Pen & Palate is not like any book I've ever read. The format itself is unique in that the narrative not only details the challenging lives of 2 best friends navigating their 20s, but it also includes a variety of recipes that have personal meaning for each of them. Their ongoing love of food is a common interest that initially keeps them bonded, but life events make it challenging to keep their friendship afloat. While I enjoyed the unique format of the narrative, I did start to get bored mid-book as the chapters seemed redundant. However, there are definitely some useful perspectives and life lessons that I personally connected with. I also plan to try a few of the recipes!

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## **Lynne says**

Full review here: <http://wp.me/p36jwx-YZ>

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## **texbsquared says**

Gorgeous, gorgeous illustrations!

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## **Aimee says**

I am a huge sucker for cook books and I would say this is just an evolution-used cook book with a good story.

It's about amazing friendship that stands the test of time and how food is such apart of our lives whether we know it or not. I borrowed this from the library so I must now go buy a copy. And it is going on my cookbook shelf. I cannot wait to make some of these delicious recipes.

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## **Kara says**

The recipes were an interesting hook, but I was never really drawn into the various vignettes of fresh adulthood. It might be I'm just too old for the whole OMG-being-in-your-20's-is-sooo-hard genre, but it just didn't do much for me.

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## **Bonnie says**

I enjoyed reading this memoir about two women, friends since high school, and about them entering adulthood, moving to two different states and continuing their friendship through conversations by phone, their mutual love of trying recipes and figuring out what they want in life. I loved the drawings and the recipes throughout the book. This book is great for people that like collecting cookbooks and reading about people's experiences and adventures in cooking.

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## **Bookforum Magazine says**

"It's cookbook as bildungsroman. The recipes are great, but greater still is the pair's unvarnished take on the comedic hideousness of being young and totally confused about everything from love to work to how much the steam heat in your crappy Manhattan apartment costs (pro tip from Madison: It's free.)"

—Melanie Rehak on Tram Nguyen and Lucy Madison's *Pen & Palate: Mastering the Art of Adulthood*, with

Recipes in the Summer 2016 issue of Bookforum

To read the rest of this review, go to Bookforum:

<http://bookforum.com/inprint/>

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