



Eat a Little Better: Great Flavor, Good Health, Better World

Sam Kass

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Sam Kass, former chef to the Obamas and White House food policy advisor, makes it easier to do a little better for your diet--and the environment--every day, through smart ways to think about shopping, setting up your kitchen so the healthy stuff comes to hand most naturally, and through 90 delicious, simple recipes.

This book lays out Kass's plan to eat a little better. Knowing that sustainability and healthfulness come most, well, sustainably when new habits and choices seem appealing rather than drastic and punitive, Kass shares his philosophy and methods to help make it easy to choose, cook, and eat delicious foods without depriving yourself of agency or pleasure. He knows that going organic, local, and so forth all the time is just not realistic for most people, and that's ok--it's all about choosing and doing a little better, and how those choices add up to big change. It's the philosophy he helped the Obamas instill in their home, both in Chicago and that big white one in Washington.

Eat a Little Better: Great Flavor, Good Health, Better World Details

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From Reader Review Eat a Little Better: Great Flavor, Good Health, Better World for online ebook

Libby Beyreis says

A good book for people who are intimidated by the idea of eating better and cooking more. There's lots of good information, some fun anecdotes about working in the Obama White House, and a bunch of simple recipes. I would have liked some more complex recipes, but as I said before, for someone who is intimidated by cooking, this book seems like a great place to start.

Jessica says

Sam Kass worked as the Obama's personal chef during Barack Obama's presidential campaign and then continued working as their chef in the White House. He also worked with Michelle Obama to create better food policies, the White House garden, etc. during Barack's two terms in office. In his introduction (which is LONG) Kass gives his background and how he got into cooking, then he goes through his food philosophy which can be summed up in the title *Eat a Little Better*. He doesn't advocate crazy, strict changes, but more small changes, trying to do better each meal and each day. I was tracking with him until he got to GMOs where he said, "...there isn't a single credible study that shows that GMOs are dangerous to eat." (p. 40) Then I was pretty much done. Maybe he spent too much time in politics, but GMOs ARE dangerous and should NOT be part of our food system at all. That was pretty disappointing because overall I think his food philosophy is good. There were a few recipes I want to try, but not many. Overall, the introduction was SO LONG and there weren't many recipes I wanted to try, so it was just OK.

Shannon says

To Read: Yes. Do you want to read stories about the author hanging out in the kitchen with the Obama girls or cooking for the president on Air Force One? Then you should read this book. Kass also writes about nutrition and food policy, but he doesn't really hit you over the head with his opinions.

To Look At: Sure. The photos are fine, but this book definitely has that hipster vibe, where the photos are toned down and are more about ingredients than the recipes. There aren't photos for every recipe, and there is only one photo of Michelle Obama. Oh well.

To Cook From: Yes. The recipes are quite simple. Kass believes in taking fresh ingredients and using spices and cooking techniques that will best highlight the ingredients. One section of the book that I found really interesting was called "Eat More Grains and Beans." Kass takes a variety of beans and grains and provides four seasonal recipes highlighting each ingredient. Just like with vegetables I often get stuck in a rut with rice, quinoa, beans, etc., so I plan on trying out some of these recipes soon.

Overall, I found this book very compelling. My only real complaint about the book is that Kass is not a fan of the potato lobby, and includes no potatoes (except for sweet) in the book. Potatoes are one of my favorite foods, so I don't think he should have left them out completely.

Karen says

Mr. Kass has a great philosophy of food and eating. He reminds us that we don't need to eat organic or locally sourced or vegetarian (although those are fine if we choose to). For many of us, it's enough to just start trying to eat a little better. And he gives some great guidelines for how we can accomplish that. He also provides a variety of recipes, and he encourages cooks to use them as springboards for creativity, not as strict maps to follow. All in all, a helpful book written by a kind and thoughtful author.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

I have imaginary boyfriends. There are some that are higher on the list like this guy...

So when I saw that his personal chef had a cookbook out..my response was "yes, please."

Even though I knew that the Obamas ate way healthier than I do at the moment. I was surprised that this book isn't preachy about what you eat. Yes, Sam Kass does advocate that you eat pretty healthy but he is actually realistic in helping with your goals.

I've made a few of these recipes and so far this book is a win for me. I made some wild rice that I almost cut my husband over. He ate the leftovers when I had dreamed about them all morning. MEN! Then last night I went full chubby girl and made a dinner featuring all Kass's recipes.

Red Beans and Rice, Collard Greens and Fried Catfish with a roasted poblano salsa. That stuff was off the chain.

I make my version of red beans and rice but his was different enough that I can add his into my short list of things the family will actually eat. A big plus is that at the end of the book there is a little section where he gives you four different ways to use rice, wild rice, couscous and etc. I LOVE that. I get tired of just making mashed potatoes because I can't think.

The only reason I'm not giving this one the whole five stars is that I wanted more recipes. I'm a greedy ho.

Let's eat!!

Booksource: Blogging for books in exchange for review. Blogging for Books is closing it's door and it makes me very sad. I've received some gorgeous books from them and I appreciate every single one of them. I'm going to miss you guys!

Alli says

A combination cookbook/manifesto on the small changes we can make to our diets for big environmental and health impact. This isn't a tell-all so don't go in expecting hot goss on the Obama's - the juiciest detail is what they ate the night of the 2008 election (bbq chicken, brown rice and broccoli, you're welcome).

If you're even vaguely comfortable in the kitchen none of these recipes are particularly innovative or groundbreaking - most of them don't even have more than 8 ingredients. But sometimes simple is best and I still bookmarked a healthy handful.

Christi says

Food policy expert, and private chef to the Obamas, Sam Kass lays out his ideas for making the world a better place and eating healthier by making small incremental changes in your diet. While I would have liked even more private anecdotes about cooking for the first family, the real gem here is the simple recipes that make healthy food seem even more exciting. Gorgeous food photos are a must in my favorite cookbooks, and you find them in abundance here. I hope to try some of these recipes soon.

Mark Doton says

An interesting account of Sam Kass' time with the Obamas before and during the presidency. His philosophy on healthy eating: Don't get so caught up in trends and what you shouldn't do that you give up. Take little steps and develop healthy habits over time. The recipes are simple and approachable and offer lots of variation.

Mugizi Rwebangira says

First this book has amazing pictures!

Don't read it while you're hungry.

It's basically divided into two parts:

(1) The first part is a very good discussion of food policy and what constitutes healthy food. Kass takes the approach that is unrealistic to get everybody to only eat seasonal, locally grown organic kale, but instead we have to take small practical steps to eating a bit healthier, by reducing our consumption of some of the worst foods and increasing our consumption of veggies, whole grains and fruits.

(2) The second part has several very yummy looking recipes that cover a wide variety of food groups. Seriously, they look good!

In fact, I borrowed this book from the library and now I think I am going to have to buy a hard copy so I can actually try some of these recipes at my leisure!

If you want to eat healthier I think this is worth checking out.

Nancy says

Light and Breezy Writing, Yummy Recipes

I didn't even finish the book before I tried the Charred Cabbage—unexpectedly wonderful! The author's writing style is easy-going. He makes foods that sound intimidating into easy to follow recipes (for the most part—there's a few foods he couldn't convince me to try)! I like his approach of doing what you can to improve your buying and eating habits without piling on guilt.

Jes says

This book packs a ton of information in a short amount of time. It gives you the fast and loose version of what those thicker, heavier books on ethical eating and food production say. There are also insightful passages about working in the White House, what foods worked for him, in what contexts they did, etc. Fascinating stuff. Lastly, the recipes look simple and delicious. Kass emphasizes trying more than exacting a perfect recipe. He gives you blueprints instead of just instructions. These are all helpful ways to improve what's on your plate. Like the title says, Eat a *Little* Better.

Beth Robinson-Kinney says

I loved everything about this cookbook. It is rare that I sit down and read a cookbook cover to cover in one sitting, but that is exactly what I did with this one. It is certainly and primarily a cookbook, but there is a good bit dedicated to food policy and nutrition as well. I LOVE READING ABOUT FOOD POLICY. As a pescetarian who leans toward vegetarianism, I feel as if this were written just for me. Sam Kass lays out several principles (Eat more vegetables; make it simple; don't beat yourself up about your choices, just try to eat a little better) and then delivers elegant but simple recipes that embody these ideas. The heartwarming anecdotes about the Obamas were a nice bonus as well.

Molly says

Eat a Little Better is definitely more than a cookbook. Former White House chef Sam Kass shares not only recipes but also tips for how to make eating healthy easy. Kass teaches you how to set up your kitchen and pantry so that eating healthy is instinctual. This is a great book for developing healthy habits in the kitchen, and the recipes look pretty good too!

Lindsey says

I was very curious to see the recipes for the chef from the Obama's White House. They were such advocates

for healthy eating and I was interested in what some of the foods they would have eaten were. Sam Kass shows that you don't have to deprive yourself while still making good choices since every little good food choice you make adds up. It's about building up healthy habits instead of making one big change to start living a healthy lifestyle. The recipes look really appealing and have ingredients that I'll actually be able to find which is always a plus for me. I can't wait to try all of these different recipes since they look so good. I received a copy of this book from Blogging for Books for an honest review.

Marzie says

4.5 Stars

"Don't count calories. Make calories count."

This is a beautiful looking and well laid out cookbook by the chef and senior food policy advisor to Barack and Michelle Obama. This is a book about *mindful* cooking and eating.

As a book about food, the emphasis is on food that is healthful and flavorful. The first 50 pages of the book discuss food and how to eat better and how to avoid waste while being a better judge of what you can use when you cook. (If you make broth, all those stalks and stems can go in broth. If you don't, compost!) Additionally, the spirit of eating what's in season is emphasized. And of course, buying locally and buying fresh, and organic if you can. Kass has some great things to say about calorie counting, essentially saying counting calories isn't as important about making the calories you eat count for something by not wasting calories on empty food. If you eat nutrient-rich foods, you are more likely to achieve satiety sooner.

As a cookbook, this is an extremely approachable book with simple recipes that I would say a responsible teen could make for their family. These are not complicated recipes. The ones I've tried have all been clear and well-explained. (Braised chicken was particularly yummy, once adapted for the low FODMAP diet.) It's rare to see a recipe with more than 6-8 ingredients in this cookbook. And that is kind of Kass's point. Fresh, flavorful food, well-cooked and properly seasoned, doesn't need a lot of "stuff" to make it enticing.

This book is a great resource for teaching our teens and young adults how to eat better, and ultimately, how to live better, too.

I received a hardcover copy of this book from Blogging for Books, their last offering before closing down. :(
