

## From a Heart Surgeon to a Cook

**Luis Mispireta**

Mispireta Family Foundation

(215pp)

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*Appealing recipes appear alongside revealing information about nutritional cooking in the edifying cookbook From a Heart Surgeon to a Cook.*

Luis Mispireta's *From a Heart Surgeon to a Cook* is an informative, health-conscious cookbook with notes on the chemistry behind its practical and imaginative recipes.

With a range that includes Cajun and Spanish dishes and different styles of cooking, this book addresses varieties of taste and the experience of flavors and how they correlate. It covers cooking methods and gadgets, too, with suggestions for how to pair ingredients and balance meals. Detailed nutritional information appears, with breakdowns of calories and macronutrients and notes on how different types of fats affect the human body.

The guided recipes are introduced with contrasting and unifying ingredient rules to help people decide how to pair ingredients they already have in their kitchen. Piquing terms like “sleekness” and “astringency” are used to describe different types of food, and appeal is generated via word choices throughout: when covering fajitas, for example, the book generates anticipation around the sound of sizzling. And flavors are categorized in terms of their high notes, middle notes, base notes, sharpness, and roundness for added appeal.

But the order in which information appears is sometimes backwards. Aji amarillo is used in the Huancaícha Sauce, but it isn't introduced as an ingredient until later on in the Chili Pepper section. Elsewhere, the book recommends avoiding trans fats but delays saying why until later. Further, some information is absent—there's no recipe for Rule #1 or Rule #3, for example.

While the book's concrete examples vivify its chemistry explanations—the taste graph, for example, reveals which flavors pair well with each other, while the Smoking Point graph is straightforward and easy to read—inconsistent presentations and an overload of information impede the book's delivery. The explanation of protein intake is muddled, for example, and it appears without a visual aid for working out the math to follow. And the taste graph is inconsistent in terms of its colors and arrows, while the book's catalog of spices and herbs is too crowded with information. Background information is sometimes included without clear connections to relevant recipes, and some sections appear without visual examples to help balance their informative language. Further, while the book is directed toward “home cooks,” it underexplains some of its preparation methods and instruments, including sieves, ramekins, rendering, desalination, and the qualifications of a “chef knife.”

*From a Heart Surgeon to a Cook* is a nutritional, chemistry-based cookbook that keeps in mind how food affects the body.

LEANNE GALVAN (August 1, 2024)

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