



★ **You Gotta Eat: Real-Life Strategies for Feeding Yourself When Cooking Feels Impossible**

Margaret Eby

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Margaret Eby's cheeky cookbook *You Gotta Eat* lays out fresh ideas for cranking out a pleasurable meal despite zero energy or desire to cook.

From zhuzhing up bean salads to blending wilted produce into sauces and dips and whipping up curries and stir-fries, this is an efficient how-to instruction manual for concocting simple, enjoyable eats. It is written with the knowledge that even the most ardent foodies want to eat "like a cranky toddler" at times. And it is organized progressively, from the most basic salads and sandwiches composed by opening up cans and jars to recipes involving a bit of cooking—"but not too much." Its ideas are for meals that may not be social media ready but that are breezy to make, are nutritious, and balance their flavors.

These entries involve upcycling random refrigerator oddments and ingredients, as with the tasty clear-the-fridge frittata. Substitutions are invited. Composed with witty asides and an irreverent attitude toward food snobbery, the book inspires culinary playfulness—wrapping ingredients in bread or its equivalent and calling it a sandwich or calzone, for example. Its universal casserole formula is both funny and useful, while an outline for loading up leftover saucy pasta over toast is laugh-aloud funny: "it's a dirtbag ziti pizza and I'm for it." Some unusual ingredients are included, including chip crumbs and Flavacol, as are tools like trauma shears. Brilliant mashups of comfort favorites like frozen ravioli drenched in potsticker sauces will entice reluctant cooks too—as will the book's sprightly illustrations.

You Gotta Eat is an encouraging, casual cookbook that invites goofing around in the kitchen until tasty dishes can be put on the table.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (September / October 2024)

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