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Cooking Light

[« Return to Top 100 Cookbooks of the Last 25 Years](#)

Top 100 Cookbooks of the Last 25 Years

We're picking the best 100 cookbooks of the past 25 years. Stay tuned for the winners in different categories each month through November 2012.



Next year is *Cooking Light's* 25th anniversary, and by 2012 more than 50,000 cookbooks will have been published in the U.S. in a quarter century. Since our launch there's been a furious boiling up of interest in food, restaurants, ingredients. Chefs left their cloistered kitchens to become media superstars. Nutrition "rules" were made, then overturned, and healthy cooking blossomed. Then the Internet supernova rocked the publishing world. Yet cookbooks keep coming, and as some book categories wilt, this one is amazingly resilient.

Cooks love books for their ability to inspire, entertain, excite, soothe, teach—and for their beauty as physical objects. The best are thrilling, whether they're eye-opening explorations of a single subject, seminal overviews, or beautiful obsessions.

As we contemplate turning 25, we decided to pick our favorite 100 cookbooks, which we'll unveil over the next year across 15 categories. We looked at best-seller and awards lists, and talked to editors, authors, and experts. For consideration, books had to be published in the United States since 1987 and either be in print or easily available online. Winners emerged after passionate debate about voice, originality, beauty, importance, and a clear mission or vision. Yes, we tested the recipes. Finally, we asked: To whom would you give this book? (Probably another *Cooking Light* reader: Our research shows you are omnivorous cookbook consumers.)

One note about health: There is a healthy-books category (to be revealed in January), but we did not apply a health lens when judging other categories. Almost all cookbooks can be incorporated into a healthy diet by a judicious cook.

Categories

November 2011: **GENERAL COOKBOOKS**

December 2011: **BAKING**

January/February 2012: **HEALTHY**

March 2012: **ASIAN**

April 2012: **FRENCH**

June 2012: **LATIN AMERICAN**

July 2012: **AMERICAN**

August 2012: **SINGLE-SUBJECT**

September 2012: **VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN**

October 2012: **WEEKNIGHT COOKING**

November 2012: **ITALIAN**

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