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The Hands-On Home: A Seasonal Guide To Cooking, Preserving & Natural Homekeeping



Synopsis

Create the DIY home you've always wanted with over 100 recipes, tips, and inspirational ideas from blogger Erica Strauss (Northwest Edible Life). Covering everything from cooking, canning and preserving to making your own nontoxic home and personal care products, this fresh take on modern homemaking will help you make the most of your time, effort, and energy in the kitchen and beyond. Over half of the book focuses on the kitchen with a wealth of information about how to organize and stock your kitchen to more effortlessly prepare delicious meals. A former professional chef who knows how to build flavor into simple and delicious home-cooked meals, Strauss provides delectable recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert like Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Granola, Forager Spring Greens Soup, Simple Crispy Chicken with Roasted Lemon Pan Sauce, and Olive-Oil Rosemary Cake with Lemony Glaze. Strauss includes details on Basic Food Preservation techniques such as water-bath canning, pressure canning, and lacto-fermentation along with a handy year-long food preservation calendar of what to put up when. Preserving recipes are organized seasonally and include Rhubarb Syrup, Pressure-Canned Chicken Broth, Korean-Spiced Turnips, and Cranberry-Pear-Walnut Conserve. The book also features recipes for DIY home care and personal care products like Nontoxic Laundry softener, Fizzy Bath Bombs, and Refreshing Peppermint Foot Scrub. Hands-on Home is packed with fabulous recipes, practical, no-nonsense advice, and time- and money-saving techniques. With a focus on less consumerism, Strauss provides instruction on everything you need to live more delicious and sustainable DIY lifestyle.

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Customer Reviews

"A lifestyle guide for eco-conscious consumers."â"Publishers Weekly" This title enables an easy start down the path to a homemade, fun, environmentally responsible lifestyle. Home cooks will discover fresh recipes and adopt techniques the author shared from her professional kitchen experience."â"Library Journal" The definitive homekeeping guide for the 21st century. Like a modern Mrs. Beetonâs, itâs the perfect book for anyone wanting to reduce their consumption, eat better, and live more sustainably and seasonably."â"Marisa McClellan, author of Food in Jars" "Seattleite Strauss offers tips for sustainability-minded modern homemaking. With recipes and instructions for 'urban homesteading,' this book explores reducing consumption and living healthfully."â"Alaska Beyond, Alaska Airlines magazine" Strauss chronicles her homemade life in The Hands-On Home. The beginner-friendly book features 77 food recipes (think green herb lamb chops with preserved lemon oil) and 38 home and body-care recipes."â"Seattle Magazine" Perfect for: People who love to make their own ingredients / Friends who are new to canning, preserving and homesteading / DIYers / Those passionate about nontoxic home and personal care, reducing consumerism and trying something new in the kitchen."â"Delicious Living" Buy this book! Far beyond the realm of mere pickles and jam, Erica Strauss provides expert insight into everything we should have learned from our wise great-grandmothers. I am edified to learn that the sweat equity and creativity behind body soap, laundry soap, and a whole panoply of personal and home care products is just as important as the food we grow and eat. Season by season, room by room, Strauss is your skilled guide to a more holistic and healthy way to celebrate domestic bliss."â"Karen Solomon, author of Jam It, Pickle It, Cure It and Asian Pickles" [Erica Strauss is] something like a one-woman Sunset magazine for home cooks and gardeners in the Seattle region. In this "seasonal guide to cooking, preserving, and natural home keeping" she relays recipes and advice for making your kitchen and home as DIY as you like, from making your own tortillas to making your own toothpaste. Itâs an attractively photographed, empowering doorstop of a book, whether readers want to learn canning or want to change their lives."â"The Seattle Times" "Strauss offers a kitchen-smart and eco-conscious guide for economical and creative home care that anyone will love. A great gift for just-married's, new home owners, or the DIY enthusiast in your life."â"Amy Pennington, author of Urban Pantry and Apartment Gardening" "The book is separated by season, offering simple tips and tricks for the

quiet, cozy activism of taking back your home, from seasonal recipes and preserving tips to guides to making your own Bronners-style Castile soap, DIY oven cleaner, and lip balm."

Portland Monthly

"Hands-On Home is the book that every household needs! It contains incredibly valuable wisdom that can help us minimize our consumerism and produce more of what we need, right in our own homes. Well-organized with simple tips and recipes, Erica's engaging and witty tone will surely make the experience fun for anyone who wants to have a healthier and more abundant life!"

â "Jessi Bloom, author of Free-Range Chicken Gardens

Â "Get your hands on this detailed guide to turning your home into a center of production. Erica Strauss is one of the foremost practitioners of the new home economics."

â "Erik Knutzen, co author with Kelly Coyne, of

The Urban Homestead

"Reading Strauss's handbook of modern homemaking is like having a very wise and funny friend at your elbow guiding the way towards a cleaner house, a healthier table, and a tastier pantry. With recipes for making everything from beeswax candles to divine homemade yogurt and tips on cleaning everything from soil stained gardener hands to a greasy stove, Strauss proves that the road to a happy life is paved by taking pleasure in making and using simple things."

â "Willi Galloway, author of Grow Cook Eat

Â "Strauss makes a great argument against artificially colored, lavishly scented, and disturbingly toxic commercial lotions and potions. She advocates instead for some basic housekeeping tools and effective homemade cleaners.Â She also gives a thoughtful presentation on how to customize your daily housekeeping routines, your regular weekly maintenance, and your seasonal deep cleaning in a way that is workable for you.Â The Hands-On Home encourages DIY wannabes to give this stuff a try, and provides justification and good instructions for doing so."

â "The Bookmonger"

Erica Strauss will help you graduate from macaroni picture frames, and create natural lip balm, bath bombs, and body scrub."

â "The Stranger"

The Hands-On Home

Â by Erica Strauss is a practical primer for modern, natural homesteading with advice on cooking, preserving, cleaning, and personal care. Organized by season, it offers a year's worth of do-able projects for DIY living, plus enticing recipes like Swiss Chard Gratin and Short Ribs in Red Wine."

â "Yahoo! Food"

Erica Strauss acts as your seasonal guide to cooking, cleaning and caring for yourself and your family in a more active way, and making your house truly feel like a home."

â "Red Tricycle"

This book tells you how to live a more beautiful, delicious, and clean life with items you probably already have...It's fun and approachable."

â "425 Magazine"

[The] bath bombs are fun to make and the reward for your efforts is a long soak in a heavenly scented bath. Kids love them and if you can bear to give them away, they make great gifts."

â "The Simple Things"

[The Hands-On Home] includes creative, money-saving tips covering just about every aspect of homekeeping."

â "Allrecipes.com

Â "Pinterest-perfect craft[s] that are as useful as they are

cute."â "Mother Earth News"â "Chock-full of inspirational ideas for keeping a cozy, cheery home."â "New Jersey Monthly"

Erica Strauss is the founder of Northwest Edible Life, one of the most popular and well-respected urban-homesteading and gardening blogs in the country. A professionally trained chef, she shares her fun and punchy perspective on garden-to-table eating and living a slower life through her writings. Erica was featured in Best Food Writing 2013 and regularly writes for national cooking and gardening magazines.

As a long-time fan of Erica's blog northwestedible.com, I was a little bit wary when picking up Erica's book. Could it possibly be as good as her blog? Would it be as informative? As authentic? And most importantly, as funny? I should never have doubted Erica. Honestly, I probably won't try most of the food recipes in her book. I prefer vegetarian food and Erica is an unabashed meat eater. But for me, that's not the point. Similarly, I've been an avid fan of her gardening blog for years, even though she's a Pacific Northwest gardener and I live in Arizona, a completely different climate. But it doesn't matter. Her book, like her blog, transcends such differences. What truly inspires me about Erica is that she's constantly experimenting, trying to figure out the best way to get things done and she's not afraid to make a few mistakes along the way. This book is not only a list of recipes for food, cleaners, and lotions based on her successful experiments, but a guidebook on how to conduct your own experiments. When you are canning, what will cause you to die of botulism and what can you experiment with? How can you get creative when trying to keep yogurt at 110 degrees for several hours during the yogurt-making process? What cleaners are the easiest to make? How do you avoid the frizzies when making your own shampoo? Even better, Erica goes at her experiments with her characteristic humility and humor. It's easy to be intimidated by all her knowledge until she tells the stories of the first time she canned a Costco pineapple or bought chemical cleaners by the truckload. She wasn't always an urban homesteading diva. There's hope for all of us.

This is the best book I've read in a long time, in part because it's full of tips that are not "old spouses" tales. Rather, Erica has done the work to explain the science and logic of the tip. And she is very vocal about tips that really don't work or are not true. For example I had always thought that browning all the sides of meat prior to roasting or slow cooking locked in moisture... turns out that's not true at all and it's solely a flavor technique. What's great about this book also is that it gets me excited to try new things and has opened my eyes to things I didn't even think about before. And

frankly I am a pretty experienced homesteading type of person! But every single page of this book is packed with information. And its not just beginner stuff... its practical useful information for the experienced home keeper. She also had a lot of recipes which look delicious. Erica is a former chef and it shows. What I like about the book also is that its separated into seasons so you dont have to hunt for current seasonal recipes. The other thing i love is that the book itself feels great. Its thick and has a wonderful feel to the cover. I can tell this will be a book I go to time and time again. I haven't felt this excited about a book in a long time!

I suppose someone could read The Hands-On Home just for the recipes, as a sort of super-comprehensive cookbook, but that would be to do a disservice to the depth of knowledge contained within. For this book is much more than just lists of steps and ingredients. It is a comprehensive education in the arts of homekeeping, the science behind them, and the philosophy underlying their 21st century revival. The presentation is seasonal, plus a sort of "basics" for all seasons section at the beginning. This organization is convenient as a reference and helps break up the vast quantity of information into easily approachable chunks. And the information contained here IS vast! But with the author's conversational and personal tone, it is also approachable and memorably illustrated with anecdotes from her prior career as a professional chef and current life as a modern homesteader. Is The Hands-On Home a cookbook? Yes. Is it a preserving book? Yes. Is it a DIY home care handbook? Yes. Is it an inspirational lifestyle guidebook? Yes. It is all of these things and much more for weaving them into such an engaging and comprehensive reference.

I've read a few home/advice books, and this is by far my favorite. First- there is something for everyone. Want fun and tasty recipes? Check. Want to be a DIYer when it comes to things like cleaning supplies or other household items? Check. Want to maximize your pantry's productivity? Double check. The book is well organized, and refreshingly realistic. Rather than some author telling me "you should clean your home this ONE way and if you don't do it this way then you will fail and you are not as good as I am," Erica Strauss delivers options, and realistically acknowledges that we all may fall off the band wagon... and that it's okay. Just get back on when you're ready. Her advice is easy to implement. The recipes are easy to follow. There was the occasional direction that made me wonder: How do you do that? And guess what- she always had the answer. This means if you're a newbie to anything in the kitchen, Strauss has you covered. Lastly, she's down to earth and funny. Buy this book.

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